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PIERS THE PLOWMAN AFTER FORTY YEARS

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IN RECENT years the tendency of those who have written on *Piers the Plowman* has been to accept Skeat's view of single authorship for all the texts.¹ Quite apart from the arguments advanced by Jusserand and Chambers, certain conditions have contributed to the dominance of this view.

One is that the only editions available are still those of Skeat; and, consequently, readers, who naturally consult introductory matter and notes, tend to be infected with his conviction of unity of authorship.

Another is the common human liking, medieval as well as modern, for associating an author's name with a notable book. People feel that something is gained if they know the name of an author, even if they have no further knowledge of him. As a result, the name "Langland" has come to occupy in the public's mind a place like that of Chaucer or Wyclif; and so, if one consults the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for information on *Piers*, one must look *s.v.* "Langland"—and similarly in most books on English literature. It is not

strange that students should object to giving up this conception of a named author in favor of anonymous authors. But they should realize that the evidence for the existence of a William Langland is dubious.

Furthermore, under modern conditions it is not customary for anyone but the original author to revise and enlarge a book, as the author of B did. Indeed, property rights would prevent such an action. Hence for us there is an *a priori* probability that such a revision as the B text was made by the author of A. But in medieval times conditions were the reverse of ours. In medieval England such revisions and expansions were a commonplace, and they were not usually by the original author. Indeed, Mr. Owst writes concerning *Piers the Plowman* as follows: "The very recensions, expansions, alterations of the original text which have raised mountains of difficulty in the critic's path, have been but the common fate, as we have seen, of every popular religious treatise of the age, copied and re-copied again."² Notable instances of such revision in Middle English poetry are the later texts of *Lazamon's Brut*, *The seven sages*, Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, *The northern homily cycle*,

² *Preaching in medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 296.

¹ "The pervasive nature of these intrusions . . . suggests a single authorship" (H. W. Wells in *PMLA*, XLIV [1929], 140). "I believe that Langland wrote both A and B" (N. K. Coghill in *Medium Aevum*, Vol. II [1933]). "It is reasonable to assume today that one author (probably William Langland) wrote *Piers Plowman*" (M. W. Bloomfield in *Speculum*, XIV [1939], 221).

the Towneley revision of certain York plays,³ and *The prick of conscience*.⁴ Apparently, anyone who had ideas like those of a popular piece of writing and the ability to express himself in the form of the original might proceed to revise and augment it.

Again, a modern reader is struck by the general homogeneity of ideas and views in all the texts. Manly said that there are differences in attitude among the texts, and in the University of Chicago Library there is a Master's dissertation by Miss Jessie M. Lyons which presents some differences. But they are of relatively minor nature and do not strike one's eye as one reads the texts. Instead, the reader is impressed by the unanimity of the versions in their attitude toward the various orders of clerics, poverty as the best state for the Christian, and many other subjects. Jussérand made much of this: e.g., "The spirit pervading *Piers Plowman* is not to be found anywhere else."⁵ Even Professor Ker expressed the feeling that "it is hard to believe that there were two authors in the same reign who had the same strong and weak points," etc.⁶ But more recently Mr. Owst has shown the falsity of this impression: "So far from being in any way unique this 'tone of thought' in *Piers Plowman* appears, on investigation, to be in perfect accord with the most commonplace orthodox teaching of the times."⁷

Finally, a reader is likely to feel that it is improbable that several persons could write in so nearly the same style and manner as that found in all the texts. But examination of the many added lines present

in individual manuscripts which, because of their position in subordinate groups in the manuscript tradition, cannot have inherited them from the original author(s) demonstrates that there were many people who could write in this way. Even the lines by John But are in the manner; and no one has been able to prove how much of the twelfth passus of A he wrote.

It is clear even from the brief discussion above that these general considerations, which are likely to affect one in favor of unitary authorship of *Piers the Plowman*, have actually no validity. Nor does the weight of "tradition." The tradition of single authorship dates only from Skeat, because he was the first person, as far as we know, who realized that there are three texts of the work and therefore had to face the issue of whether they were by one hand or by several. The manuscript authority, so often cited that I should not have the face now to recapitulate it, means merely that there was a tradition that William Langland wrote *Piers the Plowman*, not specifically all three texts. Whether it had any other basis than the famous line, "I have lyued in londe, quod I; my name is longe wille," we do not know. That scribes made deductions such as an acrostic reading of that line would give them is well known. Moreover, the tradition is not unanimous; e.g., it does not agree with the ascription in certain manuscripts to "Willelmus W." Proponents of "William Langland" as the name of the author rightly make much of the statement in one manuscript that he was the son of Stacy de Rokayle, because there is nothing in the texts from which it could have been derived. But, even if true, William Langland may have been the name of merely one of the authors, presumably B, for, significantly, the line is not in A and has been changed in C to "Ich haue lyued

³ For details see Wells's *Manual*.

⁴ Charlotte D'Evelyn in *PMLA*, XLV (1930), 180 ff.

⁵ *MP*, VI (1909), 13.

⁶ *English literature, medieval* (New York and London, n.d.), p. 200.

⁷ *Literature and pulpit in medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 548; see also p. 228.

in London meny longe zeres"; or the scribe may have been repeating a baseless rumor. In any case it is proper to recall that, in general, scribes' attributions of authorship haven't much weight: witness the assignment of religious texts to Richard Rolle and romances to Walter Map.

Clearly, we should look at the evidence, the facts revealed by the texts, with an entirely open mind. In the much disputed article in the *Cambridge history*, Manly stated: "There are differences in diction, in metre, in sentence structure, in methods of organizing material, in number and kind of rhetorical devices, in power of visualising objects and scenes presented, in topics of interest to the author and in views on social, theological and various miscellaneous questions." He showed that A₁ had a plan logically developed, that A₁ was notable for visualizing power, and that B distorted A₁'s proportion and lacked organizing ability in the continuation. Of the differences in style and dialect I shall say nothing because Manly, realizing that trustworthy evidences of these differences required the use of critical texts, made no effort to prove their existence. We have left, then, differences of visualizing power and organizing ability and the instances in which B and C in revising previous writing failed to understand the purpose of the author and spoiled his effects.

The first of these—differences in visualizing ability—has been ignored by Manly's opponents, whether because they didn't understand it or because they thought it of no consequence, is not clear. Some thirty years ago I mentioned it in conversation with Professor Schofield and concluded from his "reaction" that it was meaningless to him. Yet in Manly's thinking it was of primary importance. His idea was that human beings vary in their men-

tal-physical equipment and that the particular psychological qualities of a person must appear in any work of art which he produces. If, for instance, he is red-green color blind, as I am, the fact would show itself in any painting involving those colors that he might make; or if a person could not visualize scenes or people, his writing would reveal that defect. I don't recall that in his talk with me he ever mentioned Kipling, but anyone must conclude from that writer's fiction that he was unusually sensitive to touch sensations. Manly realized that in using this criterion he was attempting something new and something without objective tests. But to him the differences in visualizing power between A₁ and B seemed so marked that he thought he could use it; and he hoped that sooner or later psychologists would devise tests for making exact distinctions of this kind. Clearly, Miss Day got Manly's point;⁸ but otherwise, aside from his pupils, no one, in print at least, has admitted its validity. In the present discussion, therefore, this distinction will not appear again.

There remain of Manly's criteria two main types: differences in structure or organization and instances of B's misunderstanding A and of C's misunderstanding B. It is to these two points that the proponents of single authorship address themselves.

Before going farther, it would be well for me to state my position and my purpose in adding another to the depressing list of articles on *Piers the Plowman*. I have had occasion recently to re-read the three texts several times, to resurvey all the controversy and discuss it with a class. Entering upon this enterprise quite innocently and without malice prepense, I found growing in me such a conviction

⁸ *MLR*, XXIII (1928), 18.

that the controversy in the last thirty years has obscured truth rather than illumined it that I felt I should do what I could to set the study of this problem back on its right course. To be explicit, it seems to me clear and undeniable that A and B do differ, as Kittredge might have said, *toto caelo*, and that B spoils A and C does the same to B. From these, to my mind, inescapable facts, I do not argue differences in authorship. I don't see how certainty on that point can be attained unless psychological criteria can be devised. It is certainly true that a person's mind can change enormously. I can believe that a man who was master of symbolic narrative, who had almost too schematic a sense of structure, and who had a remarkable sense of proportion could lose all those powers or choose not to use them on a given occasion. I can believe, even, that such a man might come to think that the simple structure of A was inferior to, what seems to me, the confusing development of B, just as to my taste the simple narrative of Stevenson seems inferior to the complicated narrative of Conrad or Meredith. I can accept the idea that he might forget after a lapse of years what his aim was here or why he did that there and so revise as to seem to us to "spoil" his original effects. But it seems to me actually dishonest to deny that such differences exist, and essential that all discussion of the problems should recognize these differences as primary facts.

The man responsible for the course which the study of the authorship of *Piers the Plowman* has taken in the last thirty years certainly was Professor R. W. Chambers. After 1909 Manly wrote no more on the subject; Knott published two articles in reply to Chambers but then was drawn off to other activities. Both of them felt that, until critical texts were avail-

able, it was not possible to make much advance. Only Miss Day remained, therefore, to champion the cause of multiple authorship. Meanwhile, from 1910 to 1941,⁹ Professor Chambers produced a series of articles which unremittently urged the truth of Skeat's hypothesis and denied the reality of the differences which Manly had detected. Several elements combined to make Chambers' writings effective: great skill in controversy joined with a willingness to use rhetorical devices for persuasion which many a scholar denies himself; the fact that on secondary points he was occasionally right (e.g., Will as name both of the dreamer and of the author of A); the high position in English studies which he attained; and, finally, mere reiteration. The effect of the last must be considerable if one can judge by the use of it in radio advertising; at any rate, Chambers did not hesitate to repeat in later articles or lectures points which he had developed in earlier ones.

In the main, Chambers did not direct himself to Manly's points but found new arguments of his own. In his first controversial article, however, he did join issues with Manly, especially on the theory of the "lost leaf." It will be well at this point to dispose of that matter, even though doing so necessitates mention of other scholars. Chambers' arguments probably affected many readers, but Knott's refutation must convince those who will ponder it.¹⁰ More recently Father Dunning has shown that series of deadly sins in medieval compositions do not always include all seven;¹¹ and Professor Bloomfield says that in his unpublished dissertation he has further evidence to the same effect.¹²

⁹ For the list see *CBEL*.

¹⁰ *MP*, XIV (1910), 146 ff., and XV (1917), 23 ff.

¹¹ *Piers Plowman: An interpretation of the A-text* (Dublin, 1937), pp. 85-86.

¹² *Speculum*, XIV (1939), 216, n. 3.

Similarly, Dunning gives telling instances in which robbery is associated with Sloth.¹³ In view of these facts, Manly may have been wrong; but, if he was, it must be admitted that B and C agreed with him; for B added Wrath and C removed Robert the Robber to Avarice.

In his later articles Chambers tried to make B seem no more disorganized than A by referring to the incoherence which the lost-leaf theory had explained. Thus, B "is occasionally difficult and obscure: but so is A, and, I should say, to quite an equal degree. But where A is most difficult, those who claim multiple authorship assume a missing or shifted leaf." And a little later: "this B-continuation is *emphatically* an example of organized and consecutive thinking."¹⁴

This is a rather characteristic Chambers argument—specious but so intentionally confused that I have often wondered whether so clever a man as its author really believed it. The truth is that, if the theory of a lost leaf is incorrect, A is incoherent in two places. But incoherence is quite different from long digressions, from writing first on one topic, then on other, and returning perhaps to the first topic, as B does.

In his last publication Chambers says: "I am not afraid to assert dogmatically that the B-text is as well constructed as the A-text."¹⁵ He had accepted Professors Wells's and Coghill's conclusions; but one wonders if either of them would make such an assertion. Let anyone read either A and B's continuation, or Professor Stone's *Interpretation of the A-text*¹⁶ and

¹³ P. 84.

¹⁴ Preface to A. H. Bright, *New light on "Piers Plowman"* (Oxford, 1928), p. 19. I have not referred to this book elsewhere because Mr. Bright's matter seems to me too speculative to be worth consideration.

¹⁵ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXVII (1941), 125.

¹⁶ *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 656-77.

then Skeat's summary of B¹⁷ and judge whether they have any similarity in structure. It is not a remarkable merit in A that he writes according to a plan which is easy to follow; *Winner and waster* and *Pierce the Plowman's crede* have similarly clear organization; B may have a plan, but it is certainly of a very different kind.

To return to Chambers' methods. Usually he advances arguments of a somewhat different character from Manly's. For instance, he urges that, since in all the texts the dreamer is named Will and, in B, dreamer and author are identified, all the texts are by one man.¹⁸ If all apparently autobiographical statements in the texts are true, the conclusion is inescapable. But some of them must be fiction. For example, in a passage which Chambers wants to treat as serious autobiography (B, passus XI, l. 59) we read: "Tyl I forgot ȝouth and ȝarn into elde."¹⁹ This line applies to the period in Will's life between the date of the A text and that of the B. Chambers considered the interval to be fifteen years; but a recent article has made a good case for a date shortly after 1370 for this part of B.²⁰ As A is dated after 1362, we have only eight years for the transition from youth to "eld." As to the use of "Will" in all the texts, obviously any one continuing A could not change the name.

¹⁷ Edition of the B text ("Early English Text Society," No. 38), pp. lli-iv.

¹⁸ *MLR*, V (1910), 30 f.; XIV (1919), 130 f.

¹⁹ *Essays and studies by members of the English Association*, IX (1924), 57.

²⁰ Aubrey Gwynn, S.J., in *RES*, XIX (1943), 1 ff. See also J. A. W. Bennett in *Medium Ævum*, XII (1943), 55-64, arguing for 1377-79 as date for the revisions of A and a few passages in B's extension. If Father Gwynn's argument and that of Sister Mary Aquinas Devlin's unpublished Chicago dissertation, that the C text is to be dated earlier than the 1390's, before 1381 if possible, are right, the production of the *Piers* texts was much more nearly continuous than has been supposed. Perhaps this is an argument for unity of authorship. If so, I make a present of it to whomsoever it concerns.

Another instance is the way in which Chambers uses John But. It will be recalled that in But's completion of A occur the following lines:

[Will] wrou3the þat is wryten and oþer werkes
boþe
Of peres þe plowman and mechel puple al-so.

From this statement Chambers concludes that But is telling us that the author of A wrote B.²¹ It may be so; but it seems to me incredible that But would have set out to complete a fragmentary poem which he knew to be extant in a form which contained eight more passus.

OWST gives rather short shrift to another of Chambers' arguments: "Alike in both divisions of the *A-text*, in the *B-additions*, and in the *C-additions*, we find the writer making his appeal to the *Psalter* with a constancy which we cannot match elsewhere in great literature, save in Thomas á Kempis," with the remark: "Langland is simply following here the general practice of the English homilists, writing and preaching under 'the prevailing influence of Hampole!'"²²

A more complicated instance of Chambers' methods is his essay "Long Will, Dante, and the Righteous Heathen."²³ This essay deals with passages in passus XI and XII of B, which answer certain questions propounded at the end of passus XI, the real end of the A text. These questions concern predestination, the fate of the righteous heathen, and the value of learning for man's salvation. In exposition that I could not praise too highly, Chambers shows how B resolves A₂'s doubts on these points. But he is not satisfied with doing merely that; he must use this development as proof that A and B are by the same author.

It will be recalled that A₂ deals with the search for Do well, Do bet, and Do best. Near the end of it, the dreamer in conversation with Clergy (Learning) brings up the three questions stated above. Chambers writes: "Here are difficulties enough propounded for 'Learning' to solve. Instead of which, no answer whatever is vouchsafed to the questions raised. The *A-text* breaks off sharply." This is true, but Chambers misrepresents the situation. A₂'s main purpose is securing knowledge of what Do well, Do bet, and Do best are; these questions are merely in a fashion rhetorical, not meant to be answered. If they had been taken up and solved, A₂'s plan and proportion would have been ruined. A₂ does not permit himself such digressions. But Chambers proceeds: "The obvious explanation is that the poet could not devise a satisfactory answer to the questions he had asked." As we have seen, these questions were not in the direct line of A₂'s thought. His failure to answer them, therefore, is in no way remarkable and is not proof that he did not know the answers to them. Actually, the answers that B gives to the questions concerning predestination and learning are certainly within the probable range of A₂'s knowledge, and, if Father Dunning is right, so is the one about the righteous heathen.²⁴

Next Chambers takes up the beginning of B's continuation. B says that the dreamer was beset by sins of the flesh, succumbed to them, and that Age and Poverty attacked him. Consequently, he thought no more about Do well *et al.* "Now," writes Chambers, "this vision, telling how the poet in his youth abandoned the search for Do-well, and how, as old age approached, he was urged to avow his vision among men . . . —what can it be but an apology for the fifteen years in-

²¹ *MLR*, VI (1911), 315-18; see Dunning's comment in his book (pp. 198-99).

²² *Literature and pulpit*, p. 575, n. 1.

²³ Cited in n. 19, above.

²⁴ *Medium Ævum*, XII (1943), 45 ff.

terval between the *A-text* and the *B-text*? It means either this, or nothing." After some sarcastic references to statements which Manly made about B's incapacity for consecutive thinking, Chambers continues: "So the *B-text* plunges into those questions of predestination and the salvation of the righteous heathen, to which the writer, when he broke off the *A-text* in despair and defiance, could find no answer."

From this point Chambers proceeds to give B's answers in a discussion admirable in all respects except that it suppresses passages which do not relate to them. For example, lines 120-34 deal with the impossibility that a Christian can abjure his faith; lines 176-308 with love, faith, poverty, and ignorant priests.

Finally, Chambers writes: "To regard [passus XI and XII] as a succession of disjointed passages with no connected meaning at all is the price we have to pay if we start with the assumption that the *B-continuation* cannot have been the work of the writer of the *A-text*—an assumption opposed to much conclusive evidence, and supported by none."

Yet there is nothing in the facts themselves which bears on authorship at all. A more likely hypothesis than Chambers'—and one that would naturally occur to anybody—is that a reader of A, seeing those questions at the end of the text, thought that they should be answered, that he knew the answers and so was stimulated to add a continuation to A. One can see why Chambers argues so vehemently that the passage about the dreamer's neglecting the search for Do well because of involvement in pleasure is autobiographical. Only if it is can he make any case for common authorship. That it is not actually autobiographical is obvious because it is not credible that the conscientious author of A fell victim to the sins of the flesh after writing A. It is amus-

ing to note that in a later résumé of his argument Chambers adds this sentence: "Of course the visionary's confessions need not be strictly autobiographical."²⁶ If they are not, there seems to be nothing left in his argument. Apparently, the passage is introduced merely to afford a transition to the further discussion of some of A's problems.

Any implication that Chambers may have meant that the development which he traces is proof of B's organizing ability is baseless. To go back over earlier topics is no evidence of plan or structure or common authorship. Indeed, the method of development at the beginning of B's continuation is entirely unlike anything found in A. It is true that in two passus, ostensibly devoted to the search for Do well, B does return to certain questions posed by A and answers them; but he writes on much besides. As nearly as I can figure, B devotes a little less than half of the 724 lines of these two passus to pseudo-autobiography, love, faith, poverty, humility, false priests, Do well. Presumably these passages are part of the search for Do well; perhaps the parts studied by Chambers are also. In any case the development is polyphonic; no part of A is in the least like it.

Moreover, these very passus contain other features entirely unlike the writing of A. It will be recalled that A is quite clear and schematic about Will's dreams. Will falls asleep at line 10 of the Prologue, awakes at passus V, line 3, falls asleep again five lines later, and awakes at passus VIII, line 128. He falls asleep at passus

²⁶ *Man's unconquerable mind* (London, 1939), p. 135. Consider also the following: Chambers regards passus XII of A as written by "Langland" (*MLR*, XIV [1919], 139; *Essays and studies*, pp. 54-55). According to this passus, the author, after the events of passus XI, was afflicted with Hunger and Fever. This bit of autobiography seems very different from his addiction to the sins of the flesh recounted at the beginning of B—the author had a strangely checkered career between 1362 and 1370 or at most 1371!

IX, line 58. From this dream he does not awake in the A text—to my mind the only indication that A was left incomplete. Finally, throughout A, the dreamer encounters personifications of abstractions only in his dreams.

Immediately at the beginning of B's continuation, the clearness and simplicity of the dream arrangement are broken. In fact, I doubt that anyone can be sure what arrangement of dreams B meant from this point to the end of passus XI. B starts passus XI with Scripture (who figured in the last dream of A) "scorning" the dreamer. Lines 4 and 5 say that the dreamer fell asleep and dreamed. Skeat's summary of the visions implies that the one at the end of A is completed, and he makes a new one start here. Chambers, however, writes: "The dreamer falls into a dream within the dream." Apparently, he regards this dream as ending at line 83, for he says: "With this denunciation of the Friars ends what we may call The Vision of the abandoned Search. A new character, Loyalty is introduced."²⁶ But in the text there is no word of Will's awaking until passus XI, line 396.

After awakening at that point, Will falls into converse with a figure who later reveals himself as Ymagynatyf. According to Skeat's computation (and Chambers', too), the dreamer ought to be awake; but Skeat labels this passage "The Vision of Imaginative," and certainly at the beginning of passus XIII, we read "and I awaked pere-with." *Perhaps* B meant passus XI, line 4, to begin a dream within a dream, which concludes at passus XI, line 396, and to end the enveloping dream at passus XIII, line 1. To that possibility it might be objected that it is inordinately complicated and that Scripture figures both in the main dream and in the dream within a dream.

²⁶ *Essays and studies*, pp. 56-57.

The conclusion to be derived from all this is that B in his first effort to manage the dream scheme is confusing, as A never is. Other instances of similar confusion occur; e.g., Will never fell asleep at the beginning of Skeat's vision VIII (passus XVI, ll. 172 ff.), but he wakes from it (passus XVIII, l. 350). Finally, at the beginning of passus XX, when awake, the dreamer encounters Need, who lectures to him until he falls asleep (l. 50).

Difficulties of another sort appear in the beginning of B's continuation. Thus passus XI, line 8, says Fortune told the dreamer to look in a mirror named Mydlerd; "here my 3tow se wondres." We never hear anything more about that mirror; but in line 315 we encounter Mydelerd again, now as a mountain! (C corrects this.)

Again, it is not clear who utters B, passus XI, lines 148-310, except for some lines from 165 on. The reason for supposing that at least part of this passage before line 310 is a speech is the statement in line 311: "Ac moche more in metynge thus with me gan on dispute." Skeat regards lines 148-310 as a speech made by Loyalty. C ascribes the last part of it to Recklessness, which Mr. Wells explains thus: "This is merely a name which the pilgrim assumes during a reckless stage in his career."²⁷ At any rate, B left the matter obscure.

To return to Chambers. It is characteristic of his methods to utter *obiter dicta* which he expects readers to accept without proof. Thus in his book he adds to his conclusion of the essay this remark: "In the two passages we are especially considering, B cannot be another man imitating A, for the A-text has proved unintelligible until we turn back to it in the light of the gloss to which B refers. B knew what A meant, as nobody else has ever done."²⁸

²⁷ *PMLA*, XLIV (1929), 137.

²⁸ *Man's unconquerable mind*, p. 139.

But A is not unintelligible, as Dunning's analysis shows.²⁹

Another instance occurs in Chambers' comment on B, passus XI, lines 412 ff. Here Ymagynatyf is scolding the dreamer for having attacked Clergy. He says that Shame chastens a man better than challenging or chiding. Will replies:

3e seggen soth . . . ich haue yseyne it ofte,
pere (smit) no pinge so smerte ne smelleth so
soure,

As shame, pere he sheweth him for euery man
hym shonyeth.

Chambers writes: "This confession of shame by the poet, about 1377, for what had been written about 1362, is difficult to understand unless A and B are identical."³⁰ But Will does not express shame for what he said; he merely makes a statement about shame in general.

Of a different sort is the following: "After thirty years' work on the manuscripts of *Piers*, by Professor Grattan and myself . . . we are prepared to say with certainty, that this appearance of multiple authorship is due to the scribes, who have modified in various ways the text of the author."³¹ That seems to me really an unpardonable statement (1) because it makes an assertion relying on the reader's trust in the honesty of two distinguished scholars and (2) because it is entirely untrue. Chambers probably would justify himself by making reference to the dialectal differences between Skeat's A and B texts.³² But I doubt that any informed reader ever has regarded such differences as of moment or that any reader would

suppose that he meant such differences when he made the assertion. No amount of manuscript study will remove the differences in structure and the misunderstandings to which Manly called attention. For thirty-five years I have used Knott's critical text of A₁ and so can speak with some authority.

The next instance is likely to mislead any reader who does not read the texts carefully or use Dunning's book to check it. "The A-text is not a brief first draft of the B-text. It is a fragment of a poem, which, had it been continued, would presumably have been continued in much the same way as the completed B-text. For the accounts of Dowel and Dobet and Dobest in the A-text forecast a continuation on the same lines as we ultimately get."³³

Of that paragraph, only the first sentence is true; assuredly, A is not a first draft; it is a complete poem, admirably proportioned and clear in development. If Manly's discussion is not convincing, I can refer to Dunning's. Nothing about A "forecasts a continuation"; and, if there was to be one, we should have expected an extension which would not be at all like the B text, i.e., one that developed the search without the polyphonic method to which I have referred.

There is no end to the citations of this sort that could be made from Chambers' writings. Even when he is conceding something, he cannot do so in an entirely straightforward way. In a passage which practically gives up the claim that C is B, Chambers writes:

When the C-text was made, *Piers Plowman* had been in process of being copied for thirty years. It may be that some friend asked Lang-

²⁹ P. 197.

³⁰ *Man's unconquerable mind*, p. 139.

³¹ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, pp. 124-25.

³² In many places Chambers has suggested that Manly was deceived by superficial appearances, e.g., "The theory is a testimony to Manly's acute and original mind. As printed by Skeat, the different texts could not be the work of the same author" (*ibid.*, p. 124; also *Man's unconquerable mind*, p. 108). Comment is unnecessary.

³³ *MLR*, XXVI (1931), 10. In his book (p. 96) Chambers twice speaks of the A text as "imperfect." Probably he would have explained the word as meaning "incomplete." But readers would get a different meaning.

land for a copy, and the poet, who was much too poor to order one from the scribes, set to work to copy out his own work. As he wrote he made alterations, sometimes for the better, sometimes otherwise. He had probably no idea of superseding his earlier work; he was just letting his fancy play on the copy he was writing. . . . I have sometimes thought that the poet may have died, leaving his work of addition unfinished, and some friend may have taken great liberties in issuing the C-text.³⁴

Yet immediately Chambers admits that the last two passus are not revised; and he wishes to use the well-known autobiographical passages about Will's life in Cornhill as referring to Langland. But this won't do. Casual re-wording by Langland will not explain the transpositions which, as Miss Day has pointed out,³⁵ are characteristic of C and clearly are carefully considered. If Langland made them, he was aiming at a final edition. If someone else did, the passages about life in Cornhill are not autobiography, though, of course, they could refer to Langland. Neither hypothesis explains why passus XIX and XX were not revised.

It is a relief to turn from these unfavorable comments on the work of a notable scholar, who has, for me at least, one endearing trait—his fondness, which I share, for our old-time teacher, W. P. Ker—to the publications of Father Dunning and Professors Owst, Wells, and Coghill. Dunning's study of the A text³⁶ marks the greatest advance in our understanding of *Piers the Plowman* since Manly's article, for it enables one to comprehend not only the meaning and structure of the poem but the intellectual milieu out of which it came. He could do no greater service to scholarship than similarly to analyze B's continuation.

Likewise, Professor Owst has added to our understanding of all the texts by showing how almost everything in them reflects the ideas current in the preaching of the time.³⁷

It is much more difficult to judge the validity of Wells's and Coghill's interpretations. They have the authority of manuscript notations as to where in B's continuation Do well *et al.* begin and end. Many of their analyses agree with statements in B; and it may well be that they have comprehended the main lines of B's intent. But, as both freely admit, there is much in B that doesn't relate to these main lines of thought. Indeed, one can re-read the text with their articles at hand and still be vastly perplexed by B's development. For instance, passus XX seems to have hardly anything to do with Do best. I can't escape the feeling that other principles, as well as those pointed out by Messrs. Wells and Coghill, govern B's development, e.g., a chronological one: after the story of Christ comes Anti-Christ. Both believe in unity of authorship; but they do not write controversially. To my mind it seems that, by seeing a plan in B, they may be misled to the mental equation: A has a plan; so has B; hence A equals B. But the plans are certainly completely unlike in character; and when I read Mr. Coghill's: "Langland (as Dr. Wells has demonstrated) had special genius in disposing of the larger architectural lines of his work,"³⁸ I feel overpowered. This may be genius, but certainly it produced something that to well-disposed men like Jusserand and Legouis, as well as Manly and a host of others, has seemed a muddle and something that Mr. Wells and Mr. Coghill cannot explain in full. None-

³⁴ *Man's unconquerable mind*, p. 167.

³⁵ *MLR*, XXIII (1928), 1.

³⁶ See n. 11. Miss Day's and Dunning's list of instances in which B spoils A is on pp. 195-96.

³⁷ In the books previously cited *passim*. In *Literature and pulpit*, pp. 88 and 96, Owst gives inconsistencies that he finds in *Piers*. Apparently he does not realize that none of them is in the A text.

³⁸ *Medium Ævum*, II (1933), 111.

theless, it is to be hoped that they will keep working at the interpretation of B until they can produce a complete, logical analysis of its plan.³⁹

Since most of this article has been directed against Chambers' arguments for unity of authorship, it may be necessary to reiterate that it is not intended as argument for multiple authorship. My purpose in writing it is to clear away a deal of fog from our understanding of *Piers the Plowman* and to bring to view again the facts

³⁹ Professor Gerould's article, "The structural integrity of Piers Plowman B" (*SP*, XLV, 60 ff.), aims to show plan and structure in B. It is an engaging presentation of the main lines in B's thought; but, like Mr. Wells's articles, it omits many episodes in the poem, e.g., the fate of the righteous heathen and, at least in one case, includes an episode, that of the greedy doctor, without making clear its pertinence to B's plan. Unquestionably, such studies have value, but they give a much more exact impression of clear progression of thought than repeated readings of the text produce.

that the structure of A is quite unlike any plan that can be found in B and that at times B misunderstands and "spoils" A's development.⁴⁰

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

⁴⁰ Perhaps something should be said of an article by Professor B. F. Huppé (*Speculum*, XXII [1947], 578-620). This is an effort to show that the same author wrote A and B. The method is to analyze B's additions to A to the end of A. The idea seems to be that if one can show that B's additions are germane to the parts of A to which they are attached, unity of authorship is established. Since the additions were suggested by ideas in A, it would be strange if they had not some connection in thought. But see how the writer meets the real instances where B spoils A, as in the change of Meed's parentage so that her father and her fiancé are both Fals (p. 592). Similarly, where he controverts Dunning (except in one instance, when Dunning made a slip due to Skeat's text), logic and understanding favor Dunning. The quality of Mr. Huppé's thinking may be judged from his charge that Knott "unwittingly reveals a similarity between" A's Lecher and B's Wrath (p. 590, n. 22). There is no similarity: Lecher promises, by implication, to desist from his vice by abstaining from overeating and overdrinking, which stimulate him to it; Wrath, on the other hand, is not addicted to wrath but stirs it up in others.

CLEANTH BROOKS; OR, THE BANKRUPTCY OF CRITICAL MONISM

R. S. CRANE

CERTAIN skeptical doubts which I have long felt concerning "the new criticism" have been considerably sharpened by Mr. Cleanth Brooks's latest volume, *The well wrought urn*,¹ as well as by his recent essay on "Irony and 'ironic' poetry."² I am not happy about this since on a number of points I am in sympathy with the purposes which differentiate Mr. Brooks and the writers commonly associated with him from most of the other critical schools of the day. I applaud them for having rejected the temptation to assimilate poetry, by large analogies, to metaphysics or rhetoric or history or the spirit of the age, and for having insisted on considering it, in Eliot's phrase, as poetry and not another thing. I welcome their efforts to shift the emphasis in practical criticism from generalities about authors to particularized studies of texts; and I have only praise for their desire to rescue poetics from the dictatorship of factual science and relativism and to reorient it toward normative judgments. These seem to me contributions of value, and were it not for other and, as I think, more essential aspects of the philosophy common to the group, I should be inclined to let my gratitude for them outweigh my misgivings.

It is not so much the particular theses of Mr. Brooks in "Irony and 'ironic' poetry" that disturb me as the tacit assumptions about critical theory and method which have made the questions debated in this essay seem of such crucial importance

¹ New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, [1947]. Pp. xli + 270.

² *College English*, IX (1948), 231-37.

to him. On the immediate issues of his polemic against those who object to his enlargement of the term "irony" I think he is right. There is no good reason why a critic who has chosen to make a common word like "irony" or "paradox" the central term of his system should not enjoy the privilege "of wrenching the word from its usual context—of at once specializing and broadening it"; all critics from the beginning have done this, and their readers can legitimately complain only when the wrenching is unsystematic or when the motive to it, as is sometimes the case in contemporary criticism, is merely ignorance of the existence in earlier literature of an equally good and, to the educated public, better-known word for the same idea. If Mr. Brooks is guilty of these faults, his detractors have not pointed it out. And he cannot be fairly blamed, either, for having so narrowed the meaning of "irony" as to deny the benefit of the concept to any poem, however apparently "simple," which he can convince himself is poetry. At all events, if there was ever substance to this charge, it is probable that few readers of his chapter on "Tears, idle tears" in *The well wrought urn*, in which Tennyson's handling of ironic contrast and paradox is exhibited in detail, will care to press it in the future.

I do not question, either, that "irony," in Mr. Brooks's sense of the term, is a constant trait of all good poems, and I should have no quarrel with him had he been content to say so and to offer his analyses of texts as illustrations of one point, among many others, in poetic theory.

What troubles me is that, for Mr. Brooks, there are no other points. Irony, or paradox, is poetry, *tout simplement*, its form no less than its matter; or rather, in the critical system which he has constructed, there is no principle or analytical basis save that denoted by the words "irony" or "paradox" from which significant propositions concerning poems can be derived. It is the One in which the Many in his theory—and there are but few of these—are included as parts, the single source of all his predicates, the unique cause from which he generates all effects.

In this, it is true, he is not alone among the "new critics." The terms may differ, but the same tendency toward a monistic reduction of critical concepts is manifest in Allen Tate's doctrine of "tension," in John Crowe Ransom's principle of "texture," in Robert Penn Warren's obsession with symbols, above all in I. A. Richards' Pavlovian mythology concerning the "behavior" of words. The doubts which Mr. Brooks inspires thus become doubts about the general state of critical learning. I shall treat him therefore rather as a sign than as an individual, and I take him in place of any of the others, partly because he has expounded his position in full most recently, and partly because the position itself, as I shall indicate, is set forth in language which at once affords an easy clue to what has happened to critical theory in our age and at the same time is prophetic, however unconsciously, of the new direction it may yet take.

It will be well to begin at the climactic point where Mr. Brooks's analysis of poetry leaves off. "One of the critical discoveries of our time—perhaps it is not a discovery but merely a recovery—" he says in his essay, "is that the parts of a poem have an organic relation to each other." It is "this general concept of organic structure which has been revolutionary in

our recent criticism; our best 'practical criticism' has been based upon it; and upon it rests, in my opinion, the best hope that we have for reviving the study of poetry and of the humanities generally."³

What the concept of organic structure means for him is made clear in *The well wrought urn*, the subtitle of which, it will be recalled, is *Studies in the structure of poetry*. We must draw "a sharp distinction," he writes, "between the attractiveness or beauty of any particular item taken as such and the 'beauty' of the poem considered as a whole. . . . Unless one asserts the primacy of the pattern, a poem becomes merely a bouquet of intrinsically beautiful items." We must describe poetry, therefore, "in terms of structure"; but the nature of the "structure" which distinguishes poetry requires careful definition. "The structure meant is certainly not 'form' in the conventional sense in which we think of form as a kind of envelope which 'contains' the 'content.'" Nor is it a logical structure or a "rational meaning" which can be apprehended adequately by paraphrasing it in prose. Poetry, it must always be remembered, is the opposite of science.

The structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes, and meanings. But even here one needs to make important qualifications: the principle is not one which involves the arrangement of the various elements into homogeneous groupings, pairing like with like. It unites the like with the unlike. It does not unite them, however, by the simple process of allowing one connotation to cancel out another nor does it reduce the contradictory attitudes to harmony by a process of subtraction. . . . It is a positive unity, not a negative. . . .

It is the presence in poetry of a structure such as this, he remarks, that accounts for

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32, 237.

his choice of key terms, and explains the recurrence in his pages of such words as "ambiguity," "paradox," "complex of attitudes," and, most frequently of all, "irony." These words may perhaps give way to other better ones in the future, but any substitutes for them will "have to be terms which do justice to the special kind of structure which seems to emerge as the common structure of poems so diverse on other counts as are *The Rape of the Lock* and 'Tears, Idle Tears.'"⁴

"The structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes, and meanings." Whatever may be said of the first part of this formula, the second part will surely recall to every reader the famous passage in chapter xiv of the *Biographia literaria* in which Coleridge describes the operation of "that synthetic and magical power," constitutive of poetic genius, "to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination":

This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, controul . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.⁵

⁴ *The well wrought urn*, pp. 178-79.

⁵ *Biographia literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), II, 12.

Mr. Brooks prefers to talk about the structure of poetry rather than about the imagination, but the parallelism of his doctrine with that of Coleridge is none the less evident, and, what is more to the point, it has been acknowledged by Mr. Brooks himself, recently in *The well wrought urn*⁶ and earlier in *Modern poetry and the tradition*. There he was interested in defining metaphysical poetry in such a way as to reveal what it has in common with all poetry, or at least all good poetry; and among the pronouncements of other critics which he finds most to his purpose he singles out particularly the passage I have quoted from Coleridge and, as a "development" from it, I. A. Richards' definition of the "poetry of synthesis," that is to say, the poetry in which impulses are brought ironically—the term is Richards'—into conflict with their opposites and the apparent discords finally resolved.⁷ Mr. Brooks can hardly object, therefore, if I state my dissatisfaction with his critical method, first of all at least, in terms of its departures from the method of Coleridge.

The theory of poetry set forth in the *Biographia literaria* forms a coherent whole, but it is too good a theory, for all its limitations, to permit of reduction to a single principle or cause. For this reason various modern commentators, including I. A. Richards and Allen Tate, have naturally discovered that Coleridge, great as he was, had only a confused glimpse of the simple truth about his subject. The confusion, however, appears less glaring on a close reading of the text of the *Biographia* than in the pages of these recent interpreters; and much of the trouble disappears when it is observed that Coleridge had not one source for the distinctions he

⁶ Pp. 17, 230.

⁷ *Modern poetry and the tradition* (Chapel Hill, 1939), pp. 40-43.

employs but several sources, which are nevertheless correlated in a scheme that allows him to discriminate aspects of poems as determined now by their medium or manner, now by their substance, now by their origin in the mental powers of the poet, now by their immediate or remote ends. The unity of his system derives, indeed, from the primacy of one of these causes relatively to the others: "I labored at a solid foundation," he says, "on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance."⁸ But the faculties of the mind, though ideally they form a hierarchy, can yet be distinguished as to their particular objects and operations, with the result that, whereas poetry can be analogized, on the philosophical level, to the other arts and to science and philosophy itself, a special consideration of it in criticism is still possible in terms of the variable factors which enter into its production.

Thus it is that Coleridge, as one can see from chapters i and xvi of the *Biographia*, as well as from many other passages, can make intelligible use of the distinction, so abhorrent to modern critics, between the diction or language of poems and their "matter and substance." He knew from his own experience in writing verse, as well as from literary history, that the fitting of the right manner to the right objects, or vice versa, is a problem which poets actually face, and that in criticism, therefore, terms and distinctions are needed, on both sides of the disjunction, in order to formulate the degree of success achieved in its solution. The distinction is saved from becoming a merely sterile dichotomy by virtue of a further distinction, to which Coleridge himself attached great importance, but which has not been too

well understood by some of the "new critics"⁹—the distinction, which he insists is not a division, between "poetry" and "poem." I have quoted his definition of "poetry": it is a much wider term than "poem," since, on the one hand, what is essential to poetry may be found in writings, like those of Plato, Jeremy Taylor, and Thomas Burnet, which lack not only meter but also "the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem," and since, on the other hand, no poem of any length either can be or ought to be "all poetry." The reason is that "poetry" comes into being, no matter what the medium, whenever the images, thoughts, and emotions of the mind are brought into unity by the synthetic power of the secondary imagination. The definition of poetry, therefore, is the same as the definition of what "the poetic genius" does with whatever materials it operates upon: whenever "opposite or discordant qualities" of any sort are balanced or reconciled, poetry results, though we may call it, judging by other criteria, poetry (in the narrower sense) or philosophy or pictorial art. Poetry is thus architectonic thought, but a "poem," or "poetry" in its limited meaning, is a composition in words of a special kind; it contains the same elements—afforded by the mind interacting with the things of its experience—as a prose composition, but differs by virtue of "a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed." It is at this point, with the introduction of ends, that Coleridge's criticism becomes specifically poetic, and the result is a definition of poem in separation, first, from works of science and history and then from such works in prose as novels and romances: "A poem is that species of

⁸ Cf., e.g., I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on imagination* (New York, 1935), pp. 112-19; and Allen Tate, *Reason in madness: critical essays* (New York, 1941), pp. 45-51. Both passages, and especially the first, deserve study as models of exegetical ineptitude.

⁹ *Biographia literaria*, I, 14.

composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*."¹⁰ Or again: "It [namely, poetry in the narrower sense] is an art . . . of representing, in words, external nature and human thoughts and affections, both relatively to human affections, by the production of as much immediate pleasure in parts, as is compatible with the largest sum of pleasure in the whole."¹¹

The comprehensiveness of Coleridge's scheme is apparent. "Imagination" is the key term in the sense that it designates the common source in the mind from which poetry as the balancing and reconciliation of opposites necessarily derives, along with philosophy and other things; and as are the differences in the operation of the imagination, so are the major distinctions—evident, for example, in the contrast between Shakespeare and Milton—which separate kinds of poetic genius. But poetry is also the art of making poems, and the consideration of these must take account, not merely of the imagination as the source of all excellence in thought, but of particular differences in ends to be pursued, objects to be represented, and kinds and qualities of language and verse to be selected for the purpose. Multiple and converging lines of differentiation are hence made possible, with the aid of which the critic—as Coleridge himself showed—can explore a wide variety of problems and arrive at solutions in which the obvious complexity of poetic composition is not wholly obscured by

the reduction of all effects to a single cause.

The scheme has a characteristically Platonic structure, but of the better sort, inasmuch as it formulates its ideal of excellence in terms applicable to all synthetic activities of the mind and at the same time preserves the identity of poetry, as poetry and not another thing, by discriminating differences in ends, subject matters, and linguistic forms. It is a scheme with two levels, signified respectively by the words "poetry" and "poem," and the principle which relates the two is the principle, common to most of the Platonisms, of reflection or imitation. A poem in itself is a composite of diction with such and such qualities and of thought or matter determined by this or that faculty of the mind acting on the objects of human experience, the composite so organized as to produce as much immediate pleasure by its parts as is compatible with a maximum of pleasure from the whole. But a poem is likewise the work of a poet, and as such it reflects, in so far as it is successful, the secondary imagination "co-existing with the conscious will," just as this reflects the primary imagination operative in all human perception, and just as this in turn reflects "in the finite mind . . . the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."¹²

It is illuminating to see what has happened to this multidimensional and hence relatively sophisticated theory, to which he is admittedly indebted, in the criticism of Mr. Brooks. He has retained two of Coleridge's points: the proposition that the "imagination" reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities; and the proposition that the proper antithesis to poetry is science. But the new scheme in which these doctrines are embraced is a much simpler

¹⁰ *Biographia literaria*, II, 8-10.

¹¹ Coleridge's *Shakespearean criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor (London, 1930), II, 66-67.

¹² *Biographia literaria*, I, 202.

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scheme than Coleridge's, and one capable of generating far fewer distinctions and criteria for the analysis and judgment of poems. The most obvious contrast is that, whereas Coleridge was concerned alike with indicating differences, both as between poems and other forms of composition and as between different sorts of poems (witness the beginning of chap. xiv), and with establishing the unifying basis of all these distinctions in the powers and creative operations of the mind, Mr. Brooks is concerned solely with constituting poetry—that is, poems considered collectively—as homogeneous by attributing to poetry a “special kind of structure,” to be found in all poems—in the *Odyssey* no less than in *The Waste Land*, as he says¹³—but distinctive of poems as opposed to works of science. His problem is one of literal differentiation, and he has no need, consequently, for the elaborate Platonic dialectic underlying the *Biographia*. But the result of his decision to look for differences only as between poetry and other things and not within poetry itself is a notable impoverishment of poetic theory.

The nature of this impoverishment will perhaps become clear if we observe the manner in which his two major propositions have been separated from the argumentative context in which their originals were placed in chapter xiv of the *Biographia*. In that context the antithesis of poetry and science formed a part, as we have seen, of Coleridge's definition of “a poem,” and the concept of the balancing and reconciliation of opposites formed a part of his definition of “poetry” in terms of the “poet.” And the two definitions were philosophically distinct, the term “poetry” being a much more inclusive term than “poem.” Mr. Brooks has abolished this difference, and has done so by fusing the two concepts, with a consequent loss

of analytical values on both sides. His discourse is uniformly of “poems” in Coleridge's sense, that is to say, compositions in words of a special kind, and these he opposes, as Coleridge did, to works of science and other similar modes of writing. He also follows Coleridge in assigning to poems a peculiar kind of structure, or relationship of parts to whole. But—and this is the crucial shift—he derives his formula for this structure from what had been Coleridge's formula for “poetry” considered as the creative activity of the poet, and in doing so he decisively narrows the scope of the formula by dissociating it from the universal operations of the mind—the same, for Coleridge, wherever the highest excellence is achieved, whether in poetry, philosophy, eloquence, or science—and attaching it as a distinctive predicate to one species of linguistic objects. “Poems” thus become either all “poetry” or not-poems, and it would be an error to look for “poetry” elsewhere than in “poems.”

One consequence of this is the disappearance from his treatment of poems in contrast with scientific works of Coleridge's differentiation of ends—truth for works of science, pleasure (entailing the special relationship, already noted, of parts and whole in the composition) for poems. So far as I have noticed, Mr. Brooks never treats poems in relation to the kinds or degrees of delight they afford; if the word “pleasure” occurs, it is surely only as a nonfunctional appendage to his system. It is otherwise with “truth”; being intent upon distinguishing poetry from science in terms of their different linguistic “structures,” he is obliged to assume some common reference, and this turns out to be the term “truth” employed in a highly analogical sense, as one thing for the “rational” and “abstract” statements of science, and another thing for the

¹³ *The well wrought urn*, p. 191.

"paradoxes" of poetry. Strictly speaking, however, poetry has no final cause, in his system, that is anyway analytically distinct from what poems read as ironic contexts "say"—even his remark that the "task" of the poet is to "unify experience"¹⁴ signifies only that the parts of a poem necessarily have an organic—that is, an "ironic"—relation to each other.

Another consequence is the disappearance of the distinction between the "manner" and the "matter," or the "form" and the "substance," of poems. The warrant of this in the *Biographia* derives from the position that "poems," as distinct from "poetry," are compositions in words possessing the same "elements" as other kinds of composition and differing only, as we have seen, in "a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed." Poems may thus be characterized and differentiated specifically in terms of the varying faculties operative in them and the varying kinds of phenomena, human or natural, they represent, and questions may be raised concerning the appropriateness to these of the diction and meter: the reader of Coleridge's practical criticism will recall many passages in which precisely this is done. For Mr. Brooks, on the other hand, any such procedure is necessarily suspect; it is a sign that the critic who employs it is ignorant of the principle which essentially separates poetry from science. The distinction between language and thought is still reflected, to be sure, in his vocabulary, so that he can designate the "elements" of a poem sometimes as "attitudes," "evaluations," or "interpretations" and sometimes as "connotations" or "meanings." But the different words are merely names for different aspects of one thing—the "structure" which distinguishes poems. To treat them other-

wise would be to revert to what he calls "the old form-content dualism" or to fall victim to "the heresy of paraphrase," with its implication of a "logical structure" detachable from the poem. Most of our difficulties in criticism, he remarks, are rooted in the heresy of paraphrase. If we allow ourselves to be misled by it, we distort the relation of the poem to its "truth," we raise the problem of belief in a vicious and crippling form, we split the poem between its "form" and its "content"—we bring the statement to be conveyed into an unreal competition with science or philosophy or theology.

The most subtle examples of this error "are those which, beginning with the 'paraphrasable' elements of the poem, refer the other elements of the poem finally to some role subordinate to the paraphrasable elements."¹⁵ But the parts of a poem are related "organically," and if that is so, there can be nothing to which any of them can be said to be subordinate except the poetical "structure" itself which balances and harmonizes them.

The definition of this "structure," as we have observed, derives from Coleridge's definition, not of "poem," but of "poetry." But it, too, undergoes a profound change in its transfer from one system to the other. In Coleridge the concept of "poetry" is not a differentia of poems (since it may appear in works of philosophy and science), but a criterion of their value, the ideal of perfection to which they, or passages in them, are to be referred. They approach perfection whenever the poetic genius, or the imagination, put in action by the will and understanding and retained under their control, succeeds in reconciling or reducing to unity any of the various "opposite or discordant qualities" involved in the substance or the diction of a poem, and they depart from perfection in proportion as such unification is not

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 183.

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achieved. It is in these terms, for example, that Coleridge distinguishes between the beauties and the defects of Wordsworth in chapter xxii of the *Biographia*. When Wordsworth is at his best the unity is complete—there is a perfect appropriateness of the language to the meaning, there is a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility, there is, above all, imagination; on the other hand, the unification does not always take place, and signs of the failure may be seen, throughout Wordsworth's poetry, in the occasional inconstancy of the style, in the unnecessary matter-of-factness of certain passages, or in thoughts and images too great for the subject.

In making what remains of Coleridge's definition of "poetry" the differentia of "poems" as contrasted with works of science, Mr. Brooks has cut himself off from any such critical use of the concept as this. It is not strange, therefore, that he feels no need, as Coleridge did, for an analysis of the "component faculties of the mind, and their comparative dignity and importance," or that, in speaking of poetic "structure," he introduces no distinctions that depend on a conception of the poetic process such as Coleridge expressed when he spoke of the "imagination" as being set in motion and kept under the control of the "will and understanding." Any such reference of poems or poetic values to the mental powers of the poet and their operations would clearly be fatal to Mr. Brooks's central position, since it would derive the peculiar "structure" of poems from a cause in no way distinct from that which generates works of science, philosophy, theology, and rhetoric.

Some enabling cause of poetic "structure" must, however, be found; and what more natural—since this is the one remaining possibility—than to locate it in the poet's language as an instrument de-

termined to poetry rather than to science or propaganda? That this is indeed Mr. Brooks's position is indicated by several passages in *The well wrought urn*. Thus, after commenting on the quality of the "irony" in one stanza of Gray's *Elegy*, he remarks that "I am not here interested in enumerating the possible variations; I am interested rather in our seeing that the paradoxes spring from the very nature of the poet's language: it is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations."¹⁶ And again:

I have said that even the apparently simple and straightforward poet is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument. Seeing this, we should not be surprised to find poets who consciously employ it to gain a compression and precision otherwise unobtainable. . . . The method is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it.¹⁷

The causal efficacy thus runs, not from the poet to the poem, but from "the language of poetry" to the ironical or paradoxical "structure of poetry," which the poet's choice of this kind of language, instead of that of science, makes inevitable. But "the language of poetry is the language of paradox";¹⁸ in other words, the two terms signify the same thing, or at most different degrees of the same thing; and thus all the multiple principles which Coleridge found it necessary to invoke—in proper subordination—for the adequate criticism of poetry are collapsed, as it were, into one—the single principle, essentially linguistic in character, which is designated as "irony" or "paradox." Mr. Brooks, in short, is a complete monist, and, given his choice of language rather than subject matter or the poet or the ends of poetry as the unique basis of all his explanations, a materialistic monist at that.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Italics mine.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Italics mine.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

This last point can be put in another way by saying that whereas for Coleridge at least three sciences are necessary for criticism—grammar, logic, and psychology—Mr. Brooks finds it possible to get along with only one, namely, grammar; and with only one part of that, namely, its doctrine of qualification. His whole effort can be described not unfairly as an attempt to erect a theory of poetry by extending and analogizing from the simple proposition of grammar that the meaning of one word or group of words is modified by its juxtaposition in discourse with another word or group of words. The paradoxes and ironic oppositions and resolutions of discrepant “attitudes” which, in his system, distinguish poetry sharply from science and other nonpoetical modes of writing are merely the more striking forms which such qualification takes when it is considered, merely qua qualification of meaning by context, apart from, and in contrast with, what he takes to be the self-contained and “abstract” meaning, not dependent on any special context, of predications of fact or universal truth, such as “Two plus two equals four” or “The square on the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.”¹⁹ To talk about the “prose-sense” of poems is to reduce them, or some part of them, to the status of assertions of this kind; and it is for the sake of eradicating this error—the source of “the heresy of paraphrase”—that he insists on finding the essence of poetry in its exclusive reliance on properties of speech which in earlier analyses of language were treated between the consideration of individual words and the consideration of linguistic wholes determined differently by the different ends of logic, dialectic, poetic, and rhetoric; as, for example, in Aristotle’s scattered discussions of ambiguity

and equivocation; the modes of opposition or contrariety; the different senses of sameness and difference; the kinds of metaphor, including that which involves antithesis; amplification and depreciation in thought and words; the ways of making discourse lively and dramatic; the technique of the unexpected; and so on. Mr. Brooks has retained very little of the complexity and precision of this old grammatical teaching, and he presents what remains of it as peculiarly relevant to poetry rather than as applicable generally to discourse, and, indeed, as constitutive by itself of the whole of poetic theory. But for all his simplification and distortion of the ancient analyses, it is clear that the apparatus of terms and distinctions he brings to the study of poetry is a composite of elements that can be traced historically to the pre-propositional sections of logic and dialectic, the theory of diction, merely qua diction, of poetic, and the stylistic part of rhetoric.

His key concepts, “paradox” and “irony,” reflect unmistakably their grammatical origin. They are terms that designate the mutual “qualification”—and especially one mode of it—that inevitably occurs when the meanings of individual words or sentences or passages are not fixed by prior definition but are determined immediately, in the discourse itself, by the “contexts” in which they stand. “Irony,” he says, “is the most general term that we have for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context. This kind of qualification. . . is of tremendous importance in any poem. Moreover, irony is our most general term for indicating that recognition of incongruities—which, again, pervades all poetry to a degree far beyond what our conventional criticism has been heretofore willing to allow.”²⁰

¹⁹ *College English*, IX, 233.

²⁰ *The well wrought urn*, pp. 191-92.

And "paradox" would seem to differ from "irony" only as it signifies "irony" especially in its narrower sense—not the general phenomenon of contextual qualification (the importance of which, Mr. Brooks tells us, we, or at least the "new critics," have at last come to see)²¹ but the special kind of qualification, so long neglected, which involves the resolution of opposites: in short, the antithetical metaphor of Aristotle, Johnson's "heterogeneous ideas yoked by violence together," and Coleridge's "imagination."

So much for the manner in which Mr. Brooks constitutes the distinctive "language of poetry." His main interest, however, is in its distinctive "structure," and this would seem, on first thought, to be something requiring formulation in different, and even nongrammatical, terms. He tells us, indeed, in his recent essay, that the statements made in a poem—including those which look like philosophical generalizations—"are to be read as if they were speeches in a drama,"²² and in *The well wrought urn* he remarks that "the structure of a poem resembles that of a play."²³ This sounds promising—and the analogy does, in fact, as we shall see, imply one idea which, had Mr. Brooks worked it out, might have led to a more adequate theory than the one he gives us; but the promise is dimmed when we recollect that a "drama" is after all, when considered apart from the specific emotional quality of its plot, merely a grammatical entity, that is, a sequence of speeches with conflicting contexts.

Again, he has much to say about "unity," as when he remarks that the poet "must perforce dramatize the oneness of the experience, even though paying tribute to its diversity," and that the poet gives us "an insight which preserves the

unity of experience," his final task being, indeed, "to unify experience." "He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience."²⁴ But this, too, is disappointing, for it merely attributes to the poet the same necessity of "balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes, and meanings" which elsewhere in Mr. Brooks—and more typically—is said to follow from the nature of the linguistic instrument the poet uses, as contrasted with the fixed statement-making language of science. It is not therefore any special principle of unity derived from the nature of the "experience" or object represented in a given kind of poem that determines poetical structure; rather it is the presence in poems of poetical structure—that is, ironical opposition and resolution—that determines, and is the sign of, the unification of experience. And, as Mr. Brooks makes abundantly clear, the "structure of poetry" is a structure common to all poems.

Only one alternative remains: to get the "structure" of poems out of their linguistic elements or parts. And this is what Mr. Brooks tells us explicitly that he is doing. "The structure obviously is everywhere conditioned by the nature of the material which goes into the poem. The nature of the material sets the problem to be solved, and the solution is the ordering of the material."²⁵ And again, and most plainly: "What is true of the poet's language in detail is true of the larger wholes of poetry."²⁶ But what is true of the poet's language in detail, in Mr. Brooks's account of it, is that it is a language—"of paradox," as he says—which inevitably organizes itself, when two words are put together, into "organic" relations according to some pattern of ambiguity, metaphor, or ironic contrast. And nothing less,

²¹ *College English*, IX, 232.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

²³ P. 186.

²⁴ *The well wrought urn*, pp. 194-95.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

or more, than this can be said about the total organization of parts—that is to say, of lines and passages—in the poem as a whole. Mr. Brooks devotes a short paragraph in *The well wrought urn* to a familiar line of Gray's *Elegy*:

Grandeur is not to smile at the "short and simple annals of the poor." Properly speaking, of course, the poor do not have "annals." Kingdoms have annals, and so do kings, but the peasantry does not. The choice of the term is ironical, and yet the "short and simple" records of the poor are their "annals"—the important records for them.²⁷

Here is poetry, the whole of poetry, so far as its essence as "paradoxical" language is concerned, for here is ironic contrast and its resolution; and the only difference between this one line and the whole *Elegy* is merely a matter of the degree of complexity exhibited by the ironic interrelationships. We may speak, indeed, of partial "contexts" and of total "contexts," the latter being built up, as Mr. Brooks suggests in one place,²⁸ out of the former; but the two are completely homogeneous in their elements and structure, and the relation between them is best described as that of microcosm to macrocosm.

The limiting consequences of this radical reduction of poetics to grammar become apparent as soon as we consider what problems of criticism Mr. Brooks's system will not permit us to solve. Thus we cannot, by any legitimate extension of his principles, develop an apparatus for discriminating essentially—and not solely in terms of accidents of subject matter or historical style—between poems so obviously different in the special kinds of pleasure they give us as are the *Odyssey* and *The waste land*, "Who is Sylvia?" and "The canonization," "Westminster Bridge" and Gray's *Elegy*, *The rape of the*

lock and "Tears, idle tears." What is revealed, if we stay with Mr. Brooks, is merely the ironical "structure" which all these, and other, poems have in common, as contrasted with nonpoetical works. But this is to shut our eyes to a whole range of questions, turning on specific differences in poetic ends and the means suitable for their realization, which are real problems for poets writing poems and hence, one would suppose, important problems for critics. For it is clear that, literally speaking at any rate, a poet does not write poetry but individual poems. And these are inevitably, as finished wholes, instances of one or another poetic kind, differentiated not by any necessities of the linguistic instrument of poetry but primarily by the nature of the poet's conception, as finally embodied in his poem, of a particular form to be achieved through the representation, in speech used dramatically or otherwise, of some distinctive state of feeling, or moral choice, or action, complete in itself and productive of a certain emotion or complex of emotions in the reader. It is thus only relatively to the intended form of the poem, as the representation of a particularized human activity of a given emotional quality, that the poet can know whether his poem is too long or too short, whether the things to be said or left unsaid are properly chosen, whether the parts are rightly ordered and connected, or whether the words, metaphors, and "paradoxes" are appropriate or not to the thought, emotion, character, situation, or general effect. In other words, the principles of the poet's artistic reasoning (however instinctive this may be) are always, and necessarily, ends or effects of some determinate sort to be accomplished in his poem, whether ultimately in the poem as a whole or mediately in some part of it; and the principles will differ, and along with them his decisions as to

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

what should be done in constituting his action and its mode of representation, rendering his characters and their thoughts, and fashioning his diction, according as he is writing a simple lyric of feeling or a moral lyric of character, a tragedy or a mock-epic. A sign of the adequacy to its subject of any theory of poetry that aims, as Mr. Brooks's theory does, to treat poetry as poetry and not another thing, is surely the extent to which it is able to cope, in specific terms, with problems of this nature. The construction of an adequate theory is not an impossible task, but it requires a basic analysis that will take account, as Mr. Brooks never does, of more than one among the several variable "parts" which are combined in different ways in each of the many distinguishable species of poetic works.

It would be false to say that Mr. Brooks's preoccupation with language to the exclusion of the other more controlling causes of poetry deprives his criticism of any basis for judgments of value. He insists repeatedly, in fact, that they must be made. "The Humanities are in their present plight," he says, "largely because their teachers have more and more ceased to raise normative questions, have refrained from evaluation";²⁹ and he remarks that his studies of particular poems in *The well wrought urn* are based on the assumption that "there are general criteria against which the poems may be measured."³⁰ The criteria as finally stated, however, turn out either to be excessively general or to have little direct applicability to individual poems. He refers to T. S. Eliot's test, which he puts in the form of the question, "Does the statement seem to be that which the mind of the reader can accept as coherent, mature, and founded on the facts of experience?"³¹ It is hard to see

how this could give one much precise guidance in judging poems, and, besides, the test would seem equally relevant to other kinds of works, as when one says of an argument that the conclusion seems true enough, but the reasoning is simple-minded. Elsewhere the standard is formulated in terms of deficiency and excess. On the one hand, poems lacking in irony are vulnerable to it, and hence "sentimental" and hence bad; on the other hand, as he suggests may be true of "Who is Sylvia?" the "complexity" may be greater "than is necessary or normal."³² Between these extremes, a hierarchy of poems, he thinks, may be established by the test of "complexity of attitude," with poems of simple affection at the bottom and probably tragedy at the top.³³ In so far as this reiterates the old doctrine that the excellence of art consists in a mean, there is no difficulty. But relatively to what is the too much or the too little to be determined? Relatively to the maximizing, without diminishing returns, of the peculiar emotional effect proper to the object represented in a given poem? Or relatively to some standard of complexity fixed apart from the poet's problems in writing an individual poem of a certain form, and hence, in some sense, absolute? Mr. Brooks does not clearly say; but his notion of a hierarchy of poems based on the quantity and "sharpness" of the ironical oppositions they subsume suggests that he means by "normative" judgments the measurement of poems by a predetermined norm assumed to have general validity for all poems no matter what their kind or intended effect. He cannot, in fact, hold anything else but this, lacking any premises that would warrant judgments of individual poems founded on a mean relative to their peculiar ends

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

³² *College English*, IX, 234.

³³ *The well wrought urn*, pp. 229-30.

and forms. And he lacks such premises because he has no concept of poems as concrete wholes the unity of which requires that the parts should be of a certain quality and magnitude and present in a certain order if the desired poetic effect is to be fully achieved.

But this is equivalent to saying that he has no devices for dealing with individual poems otherwise than as instances, to be grammatically construed, of a universal poetic "structure." His many *explications de textes* are accordingly better described, in his own term, as "readings" than as critical studies proper. Their method is the repeated application of his central paradigm of poetry to particular poems for the sake of uncovering, in the significances which can be attributed to their statements when taken in context, hitherto unnoticed occurrences of ironical "complexity," first on the level of single words and lines, and then on the level of the interrelationships between larger passages, until the end of the poem is reached.

A typical example of the method is the chapter on Gray's *Elegy* in *The well wrought urn*, from which I have already quoted a passage illustrative of the manner in which the technique works in detail. The essay considers successively, first the effect of the many "echoes" of Milton and others in making the *Elegy* an ironical rather than a "simple" poem; then the ironic contrast implied in the opening description of the churchyard; then the ironic function of the personifications, together with their "supporting ironical devices" in phrases like "homely joys," "the short and simple annals of the poor," "animated bust," the stanza beginning "Full many a gem," and the lines on Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell; then the passage on the tombstones in the churchyard, which, according to Mr. Brooks, brings together opposites so far

held apart; and finally the poet's lines about himself and his imagined epitaph, which are said to center in the speaker's "choice" as between the two alternatives of burial contrasted earlier in the poem.

Mr. Brooks is concerned, in this chapter, to put us on guard against what he fears is the common temptation "to think of the prose-sense as the poetic content, a content which in this poem is transmitted, essentially unqualified, to the reader by means of the poetic form, which, in this case, merely supplies a discreet decoration to the content." This should no doubt be discouraged; but Mr. Brooks appears to have fallen victim to an equally unfortunate temptation, which his critical principles, in fact, make irresistible, namely, to disregard the "poetic content" altogether. For surely there is a kind of "content," distinctive of poems, which cannot be reduced, by paraphrase, to any proposition or idea, and which is not so much "transmitted" as represented: it is that which primarily constitutes the *Elegy* a complete and ordered serious lyric, productive of a special emotional pleasure, rather than simply a statement of thought. It is to be discovered by inquiring about the moral character of the speaker (as distinct from his "attitudes") and the particular problem which confronts him; about the relation between what Gray has chosen to present, namely, the calm and aphoristic but solemn deliberation in the churchyard, and the emotions which the speaker's situation and outlook had previously generated; about the sequence of his thoughts and feelings as thus made probable or necessary; and so on. Mr. Brooks raises none of these poetical questions. The *Elegy* as he exhibits it is indeed ironical discourse, in which the "prose-sense" (that is, what is contained in bad paraphrases of the poem) is "qualified" at each step. But it is still merely discourse,

with an arrangement dictated solely by the contrast the speaker is supposed to be making between two possibilities of burial and his (at least in Mr. Brooks's account) unmotivated choice between them. It has an outline, to be sure, but an outline of the kind that any sermon might have, or any serious familiar essay. The "reading" gives us, in short, not a poem but simply a piece of moderately subtle dialectic: an inferior specimen of the genre represented—to choose an example consonant with the title of Mr. Brooks's volume—by Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn burial*. What excitement and dramatic life the poem has, no less than its peculiar ethical quality, accordingly disappear, and we have instead an inconsequential and unmoving "theme" (largely read into the poem) on modes of burial. Why is it, if it is, a great poem? Or is it that "irony," in Mr. Brooks's view, is really a final good and not simply, as he indicates at times, a means or device?

The neglect of poetic content or form—the words here mean the same—is responsible, furthermore, for difficulties in the "reading" itself; and inevitably so since, without some principle of control, in a hypothesis about the whole (which will of course undergo correction in the light of further consideration of the parts), the purely grammatical scrutiny of a poem for instances of "ambiguity," "paradox," "complex of attitudes," or "irony" is bound to lead to *contresens*. Not all Mr. Brooks's remarks about the *Elegy* fall into this class, and the chapter contains, indeed, a number of shrewd and sensitive observations which any student will be glad to have. But I am disturbed, among other things, by his misconstruction of the thought in lines 45–76—a misconstruction which a prior inquiry into the unifying action of the poem would have prevented—and especially by his much too respect-

ful view of William Empson's commentary on stanza 14—a masterpiece of critical silliness surely unmatched in modern times, except elsewhere in Mr. Empson.

I have hitherto gone along with Mr. Brooks in his contention that the qualities he calls "paradox" or "irony" are somehow peculiar to poetry, and have been content to urge the inadequacy of his theory in terms of what his exclusive concern with "the language of poetry" forces him to leave out. I now want to examine the proofs on which this major proposition of his theory—as a theory of poetry—ultimately rests.

The first step in the argument is simple enough. It consists in a division of all discourse into two kinds: that in which the statements are "abstract," in the sense that their meaning is "unqualified by any context," and that in which the statements are not "abstract" but bear "the pressure of the context" and have their meanings "modified by the context"; an extreme form of the latter is discourse which achieves "the stability of a context in which the internal pressures balance and mutually support each other."²⁴ The term "irony" applies, as we have seen, to the second type of discourse: in its "obvious" meaning to the general phenomenon of contextual qualification, in a "further sense" to the degree of qualification which is manifest when opposing or discordant meanings are fused.

The initial problem is to demonstrate that this division corresponds to the distinction between "science" and "poetry." That scientific discourse is made up of "denotations," that is, terms with fixed meanings, and hence of "abstract" statements, is assumed rather than proved; that poetry, on the other hand, is discourse which never contains "abstract"

²⁴ *College English*, IX, 234.

statements is argued instantially by presenting "readings" of various poems so chosen as to embrace representatives of the whole English tradition from Shakespeare to Yeats and of the extremes, within this tradition, of admittedly witty poems and of poems apparently "simple" and "spontaneous." All these are analyzed exclusively with a view to the manner in which single words, phrases, lines, and passages have their meanings determined "ironically" (in both senses of the term) by contexts; whence the conclusion follows that "the special kind of structure" thus revealed—a structure from which "abstract statements" are necessarily excluded by the very technique of reading—is "the common structure" of poems of all kinds, since it occurs not only in those where we would expect it from obvious signs but also in those where its presence has often been denied. And it follows, as a corollary of this, that to read poems as expressions of "rational" meanings rather than simply as patterns of "ironical" qualification is to do violence to their true nature and to bring them "into an unreal competition with science or philosophy or theology" or, as other passages indicate, moral rhetoric and propaganda.

If we ask, then, what the "readings" prove, the answer must be that they prove what they were designed to prove, namely, the possession by poems of a kind of structure which, on Mr. Brooks's assumptions, poems must have inasmuch as there are only two kinds of structure possible and the other is pre-empted by science, of which poetry is, also by assumption, the necessary opposite. He has got himself into this difficult logical position, I would suggest, precisely because, although his analysis is set up in terms derived from Coleridge, he has insisted, unlike Coleridge, on identifying "the structure of poetry" literally with poems in the usual

sense of that word, while retaining, but reducing to linguistic differences, the opposition, in Coleridge, of "poems" and "science." As a result, he is committed to saying, or at least implying, not merely that "irony" or "paradox" is universally present in poems—which I grant, though I should wish to make many qualifications and to use other words—but that the "structure" these terms signify is the differentia of poems, the sufficient cause which distinguishes them essentially from all other kinds of works in which language is employed. If he does not mean this, then it is hard to understand why he gives instances of "irony" only from poems or why he supposes that recognition of "the concept of poetry as an organism," with its corollaries of "the ultimate importance of context and the fact of contextual qualification," is "the best hope that we have for reviving the study of poetry and of the humanities generally." But if he does mean that "irony" is a quality peculiar to poems, then—especially in view of the claims he makes for the novelty of the theory—we might reasonably expect him to offer some evidence that this is indeed the case. The evidence would consist in a series of "readings" of complete works other than poems leading to the conclusion that, when they are analyzed in the same way as his poems are analyzed, the same phenomena of contextual qualification and "irony" do not appear. No such evidence, however, is forthcoming, with the result that what would seem to be the crucial proposition of his theory is advanced as a mere assertion, without argumentative support.

How, if he had thought of the question, he could have resolved it in favor of his hypothesis, I confess I do not see. It is surely not a self-evident truth that it is only, or peculiarly, in poems that the "relevance," "propriety," "rhetorical

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force," and "meaning" of statements "cannot be divorced from the context in which they are imbedded," or only, or peculiarly, in poems that systematic ambiguities occur, or that "incongruities" are recognized, or extremes of opposition reconciled, or the claims of discordant and apparently irrelevant "attitudes" adjusted to one another. Merely to state the point should be sufficient, it would seem, to convince anyone that these are "structures" common not only to all poems but to all species of connected discourse—and necessarily, since all words as they present themselves to a writer are ambiguous (there being many more things or ideas than verbal symbols for them) and therefore have to have their significances fixed by the particular contexts, of whatever sort, in which they are used. There are many devices for doing this, but there are none that I have ever heard of that have not been used indifferently in poems, essays, histories, orations, philosophic treatises, or scientific expositions. Nor is any meaningful distinction to be made in this connection, as Mr. Brooks supposes,³⁵ between "context" and "universe of discourse": the one is the grammarian's term, the other the logician's; but if we wish to talk about discourse apart from the various specific ends it serves (as Mr. Brooks talks about poetry), we must inevitably speak of contexts and of statements in relation to them, that being all that discourse, qua discourse, consists of.

Why, then, all the to-do about "irony" in poetry? Why not look for "irony" everywhere? For, if we look, it will assuredly be found. It even pervades this essay I am writing, from the "echo" in the opening phrase on through: there is no essential difference, in terms of anything Mr. Brooks's analysis can show, between, for

example, my "qualification" of Mr. Brooks by Coleridge and Gray's "qualification" of the graves in the churchyard by the tombs in the church. The full and proper meaning of "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," is no doubt dependent, as Mr. Brooks makes clear in some detail, upon the total context of the character and "attitude" of the speaker in Keats's ode; but it would take almost as many words to exhibit adequately the "pressure" of the context upon Gibbon's statement in his fifteenth chapter that he intended to write "a candid but rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity." And it would require many more words—Coleridge needed thirteen chapters—to trace the contribution of the context to the very rich meanings which the words "poem" and "poetry" have when they are opposed in the *Biographia literaria*.

But we may go farther than this. Mr. Brooks finds his extreme of "irony" in I. A. Richards' "poetry of synthesis"—"a poetry which does not leave out what is apparently hostile to its dominant tone, and which, because it is able to fuse the irrelevant and discordant, has come to terms with itself and is invulnerable to irony"—invulnerability to irony being "the stability of a context in which the internal pressures balance and mutually support each other."³⁶ This is excellent, but it is a perfect formula for what is achieved, more completely than in any poem I have ever read, by the dialectic of the *Phaedrus* or *Republic* or by Hume's *Dialogues concerning natural religion*. No more than for any poem can the "insights" communicated by these marvelous discourses be summed up in a "paraphrase," however elaborate: they are supreme instances of "irony" in every sense which Mr. Brooks attaches to the word;

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233 n.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

and, although it is true that his method of "reading" would exhibit only a few of their more material and hence less essential traits, it would certainly leave out no more than the same method does when applied to poems.

There is finally, science—or rather, since the comparison must be made in terms of uses of language, scientific works. Mr. Brooks would have it that the words of science, unlike those of poetry, do not change under the pressure of the context. "They are pure (or aspire to be pure) denotations; they are defined in advance. They are not to be warped into new meanings. But where is the dictionary which contains the terms of a poem? It is a truism that the poet is continually forced to remake language."³⁷ In these statements we have the keystone of his whole position: remove it, and his account of the structure "characteristic" of poetry crumbles. And at first sight this would seem hard to do. For it is undoubtedly the case that scientists, in the physical sciences at any rate, aspire to definitions of terms which will remain constant in all the treatises or papers in which the terms are used, and it is just as clearly the case that poets, in writing new poems, do nothing of the sort. But this difference follows as a consequence from the quite different ends which poets and scientists pursue and is not in any sense an antecedent cause of the differences between poetry and science. And in particular it is not a sign that the principle of "contextual qualification," which evidently operates in poetry, does not also function in scientific discourse, when this is considered, as Mr. Brooks considers poetry, purely in terms of interrelationships of significations. The terms of science, says Mr. Brooks, "are defined in advance." In advance of what? Surely not of the particular system of

meanings in which they are used: the definitions of Euclid are not separate from, but an integral part of, the "context" in which all his subsequent theorems are set up, and by the "pressure" of which the terms employed in the theorems are qualified in this way rather than in that. And what, for that matter, is a definition but a qualification of a common word, ambiguous otherwise, by a context? Moreover, as the context, in the sense of the total system of meanings, shifts, so does the meaning, propriety, relevance, and so on of any term or statement. Thus the vocabulary with which Aristotle discourses scientifically about poetry in the *Poetics* is in large part identical with the vocabulary of Plato in Books ii, iii, and x of the *Republic*; the meanings of the corresponding terms and statements in Aristotle, however, are entirely different, and the difference is produced (it is recorded in part, but only in part, in explicit definitions) by a radical change in "context," which can be described in the same grammatical fashion as Mr. Brooks describes differences or changes of "context" in poetry. And the shifts go on within the *Poetics* itself, as anyone can see, for example, who will trace what happens to the word *ethos* in chapter 6. Nor is modern science an exception. Where is the dictionary which contains the terms of Newton? He, too, like any innovating poet, inherited a vocabulary; but the *Principia* is an original system of verbal and ideational "contexts"—it is more than that, or course, but so, in a different way, is any good poem—under the pressure of which all the old words and "attitudes" take on new senses, with the result that the traditional language is completely "remade." In contemporary physics, also, as I am informed, contextual qualification occurs whenever a statement is moved from the macroscopic level of classical to

³⁷ *The well wrought urn*, p. 192.

the microscopic level of relativity mechanics. It is true that the rules for such shifts, in modern science, can be explicitly stated and are well known; but even this has its analogue in poetry in the persistence of conventions and formularized techniques for getting "paradoxical" effects.

The syntheses of science, too, can be described, omitting questions of their truth, in much the same terms as Mr. Brooks uses to distinguish the "poetry of synthesis." One example will suffice—the formula in which Einstein brought together in a single unified equation the hitherto "discordant" qualities of mass and energy:

$$E = mc^2$$

I offer this, judging it solely by Mr. Brooks's criterion for poetic "structure," as the greatest "ironical" poem written so far in the twentieth century.

The moral of all this is surely not that there is any fundamental similarity between poetry and science, or poetry and dialectic, with which the theorist or critic of poetry ought to concern himself, but simply that Mr. Brooks's attempt to differentiate "the structure of poetry" by deriving it from basic distinctions in language is self-defeating. He has assumed, in his initial divisions, with no warrant from the facts, what he has to prove, and he has thus begged the entire question.

His fundamental error, I suggest, is that he has begun to theorize about poetry at the wrong end—starting not with poems of various kinds as concrete wholes, the parts of which, with their possible interrelationships, can be inferred as consequences from inductively established principles, but rather with one only of the several antecedent causes of poems, and the cause which they have most completely in common with all other literary

productions, namely, their linguistic matter: here he begins, and here also he ends. The choice is regrettable, since it allows him to deal only with one of the necessary, and never with any of the sufficient or distinguishing, conditions of poetic works; but it would be unfair to blame him unduly for making it, inasmuch as it has been a characteristic methodological choice, as I have said before, in the school of "new critics" to which he belongs. Nor are the reasons hard to assign. Chief among them is what I can only call the morbid obsession of these writers with the problem of justifying and preserving poetry in an age of science. This has resulted in an extraordinary florescence of modern apologies for poesy, the majority of which, in spite of much diversity in the rhetorical topics, have turned on the antithesis expressed in the title of one of the most famous of them, science and poetry. The question of the differences between poetry and science is, of course, as old as the Greeks, but whereas, with earlier critics, it was only one among many problems—and, for most, a problem preliminary to criticism proper—it has become, for our contemporaries, the crucial issue upon the successful resolution of which the fate of poetry, and even of the humanities in general, is thought to depend. How, with science everywhere dominant and the method of science universally accepted as the one road to truth, can poetry still be made to seem a valuable and respectable form of mental activity, rather than merely a survival of prescientific modes of thought destined to disappear in the future? Obviously—so goes the common answer—only by returning to first principles and seeking to define afresh the nature and peculiar sphere of poetry in terms which will at once mark it off sharply from the factual and "rational" sphere of science and exhibit it as a natural, and

hence permanent, effect of causes distinct from, but no less basic in, man's life than those which operate in the scientific sphere.

It is not strange, therefore, that critics thus preoccupied with the single problem of establishing a division of labor between science and poetry should largely give up, as irrelevant to their purpose, the discrimination of particular poetic kinds and effects. What has to be saved, or reconciled with science, is poetry itself *en bloc*; and, that being the case, the inquiry resolves itself into a search for some one fundamental difference between the two which can be shown to depend, not upon the arbitrary determinations of poets or critics, but upon divergent tendencies in the underlying natural conditions from which both science and poetry spring. Such a common basis was frequently found in earlier times in the faculties of the soul (as in Bacon and Macaulay); in the twentieth century, however, this will no longer do; as everyone knows, the golden key which is counted on to unlock all doors is now not the mind but language. It is here, accordingly, and not either in the final character of poetic works as opposed to scientific, or in the differentiation of ends or subject matters or techniques, that most of the "new critics" have sought their first principles, in the simple faith that, because language is the instrument of both scientists and poets, the high claims of poetry can be asserted most effectively by deriving all its essential characteristics from a consideration of those potentialities of language which are left over once the specialized use of words in science has been defined. So everything turns, for I. A. Richards, on the opposition of "referential" and "emotive" speech; for John Crowe Ransom, on the antithesis of logical "structure" and poetic "texture"; and

for Mr. Brooks, as we have seen, on the contrast between the "abstract" language of science and the "paradoxical" language of poetry. The words of poetry have thus become all-important, to the neglect or obscuration of all the factors in poetic production which determine, for the poet, what the words ought to be; and poetry, ironically enough, is defended against materialistic science by arguments which attempt, materialistically, to deduce poetic form from an examination of the medium alone.

I am convinced that this has led only to a blind alley, and that a "newer" criticism is needed which will not worry so much about saving poetry—this after all has been with us a very long time, and besides contains within itself powerful springs of natural human pleasure, surely not yet exhausted—but will devote itself to a scholarly and philosophically comprehensive study of poetry calculated to refine our instinctive enjoyment of poems by giving us an adequately sensitive critical apparatus for discriminating among them. I have tried to show how Mr. Brooks, having made a false start, is prevented, by the pressure of the limited context he has selected, from developing such an apparatus. Not everything he says or implies in his writings, however, is strictly functional in terms of his characteristic method; and among the pale ineffectual ghosts from earlier and better systems which hover, in the shapes of undefined and inoperative words, on the confines of his argument, there are several which, if brought back to life, might do serviceable work. Among these peripheral terms we find "beauty," "unity," "propriety," "drama," "character," and, especially, "imitation." "The poem," he writes, "if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of reality—in this sense, at least, it is an 'imitation'—by *being* an experience rather than

any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience."³⁸

If he had started here rather than with "the language of paradox," he might have got somewhere (and incidentally been able to give a better account of "irony" itself), for here is clearly a first principle by which poetry may be distinguished essentially, and not merely accidentally, from science, philosophy, history, and rhetoric, and precise consequences drawn concerning the construction and peculiar beauty of poems of different kinds. But the statement is isolated in his system: it does not follow from his theory of language, nor is it made a starting-point for any significant deductions. So, too, with the other terms: they remain "irrelevant and discordant" elements, meaningful enough in other critical analyses, but never, in Mr. Brooks, subsumed under any general poetic principles. Yet the presence of such words in his exposition may be taken as a sign of his own half-conscious awareness that grammar is not enough; and at all events we may regard them as encouraging portents, suggestive of a direction which criticism might take if only it freed itself from the despotism of language and the unique cause and aimed at

a multidimensional theory of poetry that would be, like Mr. Brooks's, literal rather than Platonic in method, but much more adequate than his to the discrimination of peculiarly poetic values and to the development of normative judgments relative to all the complex problems—of medium, object, manner, and effect—that enter into the various poetic arts.

To reconstruct criticism in this way would obviously be to reverse the whole tendency of critical reasoning as practiced by the "new critics." It would be to substitute the matter-of-fact and concrete for the abstract; the a posteriori for the a priori; the argument from immediately sensible poetic effects to their proximate poetic causes for the argument from remote and nonpoetic causes to only general and common poetic effects. It would be, in a word, to study poems as complete wholes possessed of distinctive emotional powers rather than merely the materials and devices of poems in a context of extra-poetic considerations.³⁹ And that would be new indeed.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

³⁹ Some of the possibilities of such a reconstruction are discussed in an essay by my colleague, Elder Olson, in a volume entitled "Critiques and essays in criticism," edited by Robert W. Stallman (to be published by the Ronald Press in January, 1949).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

VICTORIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1947

Edited by AUSTIN WRIGHT

THIS bibliography has been prepared by a committee of the Victorian Literature Group of the Modern Language Association of America: Austin Wright, chairman, Carnegie Institute of Technology; Charles Frederick Harrold, Ohio State University; William Irvine, Stanford University; and William Frost, Wesleyan University. It attempts to list the noteworthy publications of 1947 (including reviews of these and earlier items) that have a bearing on English literature of the Victorian period, and similar publications of earlier date that have been inadvertently omitted from the preceding Victorian bibliography. Unless otherwise stated, the date of publication is 1947. Reference to a page in the bibliography for 1946, in *Modern philology*, May, 1947, is made by the following form: See VB 1946, 261. Some cross-references are given, though not all that are possible. For certain continuing bibliographical works the reader should consult VB 1941, the last annual bibliography in which such works were listed in full. The editor wishes to thank Professor Carl J. Weber, of Colby College, and Professor William D. Templeman, of the University of Southern California, for special assistance.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AB	= American bookman
AGR	= American-German review
AHR	= American historical review
AL	= American literature
AM	= Atlantic monthly
APSR	= American political science review
APSS	= Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science
ASR	= American sociological review

BBDI	= Bulletin of bibliography and dramatic index
BLR	= Bodleian library record
BSP	= Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America
CE	= College English
CHJ	= Cambridge historical journal
CLS	= Comparative literature studies
CR	= Contemporary review
CSBW	= Chicago Sun book week
CWd	= Catholic world
DUJ	= Durham University journal
EHR	= English historical review
EJ	= English journal
ELH	= Journal of English literary history
ESl	= English studies
Ex	= Erpicator
FR	= Fortnightly review
HJ	= Hibbert journal
HLQ	= Huntington library quarterly
HTB	= New York Herald-Tribune weekly book review
JAA	= Journal of aesthetics and art criticism
JEGP	= Journal of English and Germanic philology
JEH	= Journal of economic history
JHI	= Journal of the history of ideas
JMH	= Journal of modern history
JP	= Journal of philosophy
JPE	= Journal of political economy
JR	= Journal of religion
JRLB	= Bulletin of the John Rylands library
KR	= Kenyon review
LAR	= Library Association record
LJ	= Library journal
LL	= Life and letters today
LQ	= Library quarterly
LQHR	= London quarterly and Holborn review
LR	= Library review
MLJ	= Modern language journal
MLN	= Modern language notes
MLQ	= Modern language quarterly
MLR	= Modern language review
MP	= Modern philology
M & L	= Music and letters
N	= Nation
NC	= Nineteenth century and after

- NEQ** = *New England quarterly*
New R = *New republic*
NR = *National review*
NS = *New statesman and nation*
NYTBR = *New York Times book review*
N & Q = *Notes and queries*
ParR = *Partisan review*
PLC = *Princeton University Library chronicle*
PMLA = *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
PQ = *Philological quarterly*
PSQ = *Political science quarterly*
QJS = *Quarterly journal of speech*
QQ = *Queen's quarterly*
QR = *Quarterly review*
QRL = *Quarterly review of literature*
RES = *Review of English studies*
RLC = *Revue de littérature comparée*
RoR = *Romantic review*
S = *Spectator*
SAQ = *South Atlantic quarterly*
SeR = *Sewanee review*
SP = *Studies in philology*
SRL = *Saturday review of literature*
TLS = *Times literary supplement*
TQ = *University of Toronto quarterly*
VQR = *Virginia quarterly review*
YR = *Yale review*

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who was to introduce true Gothic into the Victorian consciousness. Mr. Gwynn's book thus cuts across literature, art, architecture, religion, and the Victorian intellect in general. It throws light on Newman's conversion, on the character "Eustace Lyle" in Disraeli's *Coningsby*, on the mid-Victorian "craze for Gothic," on the activities of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle (who lurks in the background of the early Tractarian years, long before Newman's conversion), and on the fact that, when Newman finally decided to join the Roman communion, there was readily at hand the Italian missionary, Father Dominic Barberi, who promptly accepted him on the night of October 8, 1845, and formally admitted him to the Catholic church on October 9. Mr. Gwynn's book is not a major event—its length is only 156 pages—but it is a valuable little study for anyone interested in the religious changes of the mid-nineteenth century.—C. F. H.

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Stevenson, Lionel. "Dickens and the origin of *The warden*." *Trollopian*, II, 83-90.

Warner, Rex. *The cult of power*. London: John Lane; Philadelphia: Lippincott. Pp. 190.

Rev. by Mark Schorer in *NYTBR*, Sept. 14, p. 4. Eight essays, three treating of Dickens: "On reading Dickens," "Dostoevsky and the collapse of liberalism," "The allegorical method."

Wenger, Jared. "Character-types of Scott, Balzac, Dickens, and Zola." *PMLA*, LXII, 213-32.

Classification and analysis of characters, male, female, and animal, according to function. Scott's basic masculine type is "the awesome father"; Balzac's, "the hungry tiger"; Dickens', the "sadist"; Zola's, the "pauvre diable." Acute, illuminating, cleverly written.—W. I.

Woodman, R. E. G. "Dickens and his publishers." *TLS*, Jan. 25, p. 51.

Disraeli (see also II, Gwynn). *Novels of high society from the Victorian age*. Ed. Anthony Powell. London: Pilot pr.

Rev. in *TLS*, Oct. 11, p. 520. Comprises Disraeli's *Henrietta Temple*, G. H. Lawrence's *Guy Livingstone*, and Ouida's *Moths*.

Arnold, Carroll C. "The speech style of Benjamin Disraeli." *Quart. jour. of speech*, XXXIII, 427-36.

Cline, C. L. "Lady Blessington and Disraeli." *N & Q*, Oct. 4, pp. 426-28.

Contains two letters from Lady Blessington to Disraeli, one previously unpublished and the other previously published only in part.

Dowson. *The stories of Ernest Dowson*. Ed. Mark Longaker. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania. pr. Pp. 122.

Rev. by C. B. in *NYTBR*, Oct. 12, p. 20. Consists of the five tales from *Dilemmas* (1895), the five prose poems from *Decorations* (1899), one story from *The yellow book*, and three from *The Savoy*.

Eden, Emily. *The semi-attached couple.* Introd. by Anthony Eden. New York: Houghton. Pp. xvi+249.

Rev. by Marion Strobel in *CSBW*, June 15, p. 1; by Ernestine Evans in *HTB*, June 15, p. 2; by K. T. Willis in *LJ*, June 1, p. 887; by Carlos Baker in *NYTBR*, July 6, p. 8; by R. C. Benét in *SRL*, June 28, p. 11. A republishing of a "Victorian museum piece." Original date, 1860.

Eliot (see also III, McCullough). Bullett, Gerald. *George Eliot.* London: Collins. Pp. 256.

Rev. by Richard Church in *FR*, CLXII, 146-47; by V. S. Pritchett in *NS*, Aug. 9, p. 113; by Bonamy Dobrée in *S*, June 13, pp. 690, 692; in *TLS*, Aug. 2, p. 390 (see also pp. 403, 427, 451).

Very competent biography; graceful and witty in style; based on the latest researches; marred here and there with subjective or opinionated passages; not the biography of George Eliot. —C. F. H.

Evans, B. Ifor. "George Eliot." *CR*, CLXXII, 153-56.

Review article based on Bullett's *George Eliot* (see above).

Haight, Gordon S. "George Eliot's letters." *TLS*, May 3, p. 211.

Letter to ed. requesting letters, etc., for an edition.

Lloyd, J. "George Eliot's mother." *N & Q*, Feb. 15, p. 83.

Query.

R., V. "George Eliot and the classics: Greek and nemesis. I, II." *N & Q*, Dec. 13, pp. 544-46; Dec. 27, pp. 564-65.

Fitzgerald, A., H.; and Bray, Dennis. "Saki." *N & Q*, Jan. 11, p. 17; Mar. 8, p. 109.

Query and reply.

Terhune, Alfred McKinley. *The life of Edward Fitzgerald, translator of "The rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam."* New Haven: Yale univ. pr. Pp. xi+373.

Rev. by David McCord in *AM*, CLXXIX, 154; in *Amer. merc.*, LXIV, 634; by J. T. Frederick in *CSBW*, Apr. 20, p. 6; by DeLancey Ferguson in *HTB*, Apr. 13, p. 6; by K. T. Willis in *LJ*, Mar. 1, p. 387; in *N & Q*, Oct. 18, p. 462; by Raymond Mortimer in *NS*, Nov. 15, p. 393; by Carlos Baker in *NYTBR*, Apr. 6, pp. 3, 28; by

Bonamy Dobrée in *S*, Oct. 17, p. 498; by R. Ellis Roberts in *SRL*, May 10, p. 21; in *TLS*, Dec. 27, p. 676.

Lovers of "Old Fitz" may find this biography of Edward Fitzgerald a trifle overearnest, a bit too "scholarly" in the fussy sense of that term. But no one can deny that this is a masterly *Life*, as regards accuracy, detail, objectivity, planning, and the presentation of new material. This is the "first biography to be written with the approval of the Fitzgerald family" (p. viii), and it is based on a great mass of hitherto unpublished material. It is of such substantial merit that no future writer on Fitzgerald can afford to neglect it. No doubt there will some day be a popular, book-club, glamorized volume on "Old Fitz," who is a natural for the clever journalistic biographer; but Professor Terhune will have supplied the carefully weighed and carefully presented facts. An excellent addition to Victorian scholarship. —C. F. H.

Froude, Bennett, Raymond M. (ed.). "[Some] letters of James Anthony Froude." *Rutgers libr. jour.*, XI, 1-15.

Of a series of twenty-nine letters eventually to be edited, these are the first six. They are addressed by Froude (in his capacity of editor of *Fraser's*) to Gen. Gustave Paul Cluseret. Full and scholarly annotation. —W. F.

Gaskell. "Mrs. Gaskell's manifesto." *TLS*, Aug. 30, p. 438.

A review of Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, reprinted by John Lehmann, with introd. by Lettice Cooper.

Gissing. *A life's morning.* London: Home & Van Thal.

A reprint. Rev. in *N & Q*, Dec. 13, p. 550.

"Notes on recent acquisitions." *Yale libr. gaz.*, XXI, 62.

Records the gift to Yale of twenty manuscript Gissing letters.

Pritchett, V. S. "Books in general." *NS*, Nov. 8, p. 372.

Steiner, Jacqueline. "George Gissing to his sister: letters of George Gissing." *More books*, XXII, 324-36, 376-86.

Seventeen letters by Gissing to his sister Nelly (Ellen).

Green. Angus-Butterworth, L. M. "John Richard Green." *SAQ*, XLVI, 109-18.

- Haggard, Scott, J. E.** *A bibliography of the works of Sir Henry Rider Haggard, 1856-1925.* Takeley: Elkin Mathews. Pp. 258.
Rev. in *TLS*, Aug. 23, p. 432.
- Hardy** (see also III, Baker, McCullough). Letter to the Rev. John Oliver, Feb. 6, 1911. *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 67.
Dealing with a passage in *The dynasts*.
The old clock. . . See VB 1946, 270.
This poem turns out to be not by Hardy but by C. Swain. See Weber, Carl J. "Not Hardy's verse." *New York sun*, Oct. 1.
- Bowra, C. M.** *The lyrical poetry of Thomas Hardy.* (Byron foundation lecture, 1946). Nottingham: University college. Pp. 20.
Rev. in *N & Q*, May 3, p. 177; in *TLS*, June 14, p. 295.
- Cecil, Lord David.** *Hardy the novelist*. . . See VB 1946, 270.
Rev. by J. W. Beach in *KR*, X, 140-46; by J. G. Fletcher in *SeR*, LV, 173-78.
- Erskine, John.** "Tess, plaything of fate." *Amer. weekly*, Oct. 12, p. 2.
Unscholarly, inaccurate, superficial.—C. J. W.
- Fletcher, John Gould.** "Two Victorians: Trollope and Hardy." *SeR*, LV, 173-78.
Review article on the Stebbins volume on the Trollopes, and Cecil's *Hardy the novelist* (see VB 1946, 277, 270).
- Flower, Sir Newman.** "The poor man and the lady." *London times*, June 15.
A letter.
- Gow, Ronald.** *Tess.* (A dramatization of Hardy's novel.) Performed in Bristol and London.
"Hardy's earliest verses." *TLS*, Aug. 23, p. 432; see also p. 439.
"Hardy's twilight as a novelist." *TLS*, June 28, p. 322.
- Rosenberg, Bernard.** "Hardy's earliest poem." *TLS*, Sept. 27, p. 497.
- Sherman, George Witter.** "Thomas Hardy and the Reform league." *N & Q*, Sept. 6, pp. 383-84.
- Southworth, James Granville.** *The poetry of Thomas Hardy.* New York: Columbia univ. pr. Pp. ix+250.
Rev. by J. T. Frederick in *CSBW*, Aug. 17, p. 4; by Melvin Maddocks in *Christian sci. mon. mag.*, Aug. 23, p. 10; by Carlos Baker in *NYTBR*, Aug. 3, pp. 3, 14.
- Stallman, Robert Wooster.** "Hardy's hour-glass novel." *SeR*, LV, 281-96.
A study of the plot-structure of *The return of the native*.
- Trewin, J. C.** "In other words." *Illus. London News*, June 7, p. 614.
Comment on Gow's dramatization of *Tess* (see above).
- Van Doren, Mark.** "Homage to three: Thomas Hardy, poet." *KR*, IX, 70.
Verse tribute.
- Weber, Carl J.** "Books from Hardy's library." *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 66-67.
- Weber, Carl J.** *Hardy in America*. . . See VB 1946, 271.
Rev. by L. C. Wroth in *HTB*, Mar. 2, p. 28; by J. W. Beach in *MLN*, LXII, 574-75.
- [Weber, Carl J.] "Hardy additions." *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 46-49.
- [Weber, Carl J.] "Some recent [Hardy] gifts." *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 66-67.
- Webster, Harvey Curtis.** "Hardy as thinker." *The tiger's eye*, December, pp. 49-60.
- Webster, Harvey Curtis.** *On a darkling plain: the art and thought of Thomas Hardy.* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago pr. Pp. x+239.
This meaty volume provides a generally reliable guide through the philosophical labyrinth of Hardy's writings. Professor Webster examines Hardy's early life and education and studies his background in detail, before proceeding to a careful analysis, title by title, of all Hardy's fiction. He comes to the conclusion that "there is not a single novel in which Hardy is consistently a fatalist, a determinist, an optimist, or a pessimist" (p. 134). This inconsistency would be a defect in a systematic philosopher, but it is a source of enrichment and variety in an artist. Its causes are traced to Hardy's early environment and to the intellectual ferment of his time. The religious and scientific sources of spiritual unrest are handled with a mastery not always found in

books on this subject, and the cheerful and idealistic normality of Hardy's earliest years are presented against their Dorset background with admirable clarity. The author treats Hardy's later experiences in a somewhat cavalier fashion, brushing aside his frustrations as a would-be dramatist, minimizing his domestic embarrassments, and dogmatizing at times regarding the literary influences at work in Hardy's mind. This results in a certain amount of biographical unreliability, but fortunately the philosophical perspective is not greatly marred by this fact. Professor Webster proceeds to an able examination of *The dynasts*, which he fixes in its philosophical setting with an authoritative voice lacking (say) in the work of Garwood, Elliott, and some others (but found in John Laird's *Philosophical incursions*).

Perhaps the best thing in Mr. Webster's performance is his abiding sense of the coherence of Hardy's life and thought—of the fact that he developed naturally and not illogically—that a consistent evolution follows a chartable course in his mind, from cradle to grave. One closes this book with the conviction that its author has effectively illuminated a subject where there has often been much darkness.—C. J. Weber.

Harris. *Frank Harris, his life and adventures: an autobiography.* Introd. by Grant Richards. London: Secker. Pp. xiv + 552.

Rev. in *TLS*, July 19, p. 367.

Root, Merrill. *Frank Harris.* New York: Odyssey. Pp. xi + 324.

Rev. by Harrison Smith in *SRL*, June 21, p. 18.

Henley (see also I, Petrie; II, Henkin). Buckley, Jerome H. *William Ernest Henley.* . . . See VB 1946, 272.

Rev. in *TLS*, June 21, p. 308 (see also p. 365).

Connell, John. "W. E. Henley." *TLS*, June 21, p. 313.

Letter to editor.

Hood. Wallis, N. Hardy. "Thomas Hood (1799-1845)." *Essays by divers hands: Trans. roy. soc. lit., new ser., XXIII*, 103-15.

Willy, Margaret. "Thomas Hood: the man and the poet." *English*, VI (1946), 9-13.

Hopkins (see also **Bridges**: Gordon). Bischoff, A. "G. Manley Hopkins." *TLS*, Apr. 12, p. 171.

Letter requesting Hopkins' correspondence, etc. Author plans critical study.

Chiselin, Brewster. "Reading sprung rhythms." *Poetry*, LXX, 86-93.

Argues that Hopkins' rhythms are accentual, not dipodic.

Cohen, Selma Jeanne. "The poetic theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins." *PQ*, XXVI, 1-20.

Fausset, H. l'Anson. *Poets and pundits: a collection of essays.* New Haven: Yale univ. pr. Pp. 319.

Contains essay on Hopkins.

Gibson, William M. "Hopkins' 'To R. B.'" *Ex*, VI, No. 2, item 12.

Holloway, Sister Marcella Marie. *The prosodic theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* Washington: Catholic univ. of America pr. Pp. 121.

Howarth, R. G. "Hopkins and Sir Thomas More." *N & Q*, Sept. 6, p. 389.

Howarth, R. G. "Hopkins's earlier poems: the order of composition." *N & Q*, June 14, pp. 255-56.

Mathison, John K. "The poetic theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins." *PQ*, XXVI, 21-35.

Purcell, J. M. "The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Cronos*, I, No. 2, 21-25.

Ruggles, Eleanor. *Gerard Manley Hopkins.* . . . See VB 1945, 272.

Rev. by Philip Trower in *S*, Dec. 19, pp. 776, 778.

Schneider, Elisabeth. "Hopkins' 'My own heart let me more have pity on.'" *Ex*, V, No. 7, item 51.

Thomas, M. G. Lloyd. "Hopkins as critic." *Essays and studies by members of the English Assoc., XXXII* (1946), 61-73.

Housman (see also **Morley**: White). Weber, Carl J. "Willa Cather's call on Housman." *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 61-64.

White, William. "E. A. Robinson and A. E. Housman." *Colby libr. quart.*, II, 42-43.

White, William. "'To A. E. Housman': echoes in novels and verses." *BBDI*, XIX, 73-75.

A list of poems addressed to Housman, books using lines from his poetry, parodies of *A Shropshire lad*, cartoons, and novels and plays which quote him.

Hughes. Micklewright, F. H. Amphlett. "John Ceirog Hughes." *N & Q*, Mar. 22, pp. 122-23.

Hughes (1832-87) is here called "one of the greatest of modern Welsh lyric poets."

Hurnard. Hamilton, G. R. *James Hurnard, a Victorian character*. . . . See VB 1946, 273.

Rev. in *Dalhousie rev.*, XXVII, 246-49.

Huxley. Onions, C. T. "Agnostic." *TLS*, May 10, p. 225; see also p. 451.

On the origin of the word, relative to T. H. Huxley, R. H. Hutton, etc.

Jefferies. Arkell, Reginald. *Richard Jefferies and his countryside: biography of a countryman*. London: Herbert Jenkins. Pp. 192.

Rev. by Gwendolen Freeman in *S*, Mar. 14, p. 280.

Kilvert. Robert Francis, *Selections from Kilvert's diary, 1870-1879*. Chosen, ed., and introd. by William Plomer; special introd. by A. L. Rowse. New York: Macmillan. Pp. xvi+407.

Rev. in *Amer. merc.*, LXIV, 632; by Irwin Edman in *HTB*, Feb. 23, p. 1; by G. W. Wakefield in *LJ*, Dec. 1, 1946, p. 1713; by Herbert Lyons in *NYTBR*, Feb. 23, p. 4; by R. E. Roberts in *SRL*, Mar. 22, p. 27; by John Derby in *YR*, XXXVII, 183-85.

Invaluable to the Victorianist, in spite of fragmentariness (a larger ed. of the diary appeared in England in 1938, 1939, 1940) and very negligible editing.—C. F. H.

Kinglake, Alexander. Wood, Frederick T. "An English traveller of the nineteenth century." *Anglica*, I (1946), 252-60.

Kingsley. Houghton, Walter E. "The issue between Kingsley and Newman." *Theology today*, IV, 80-101.

Kendall, Guy. *Charles Kingsley and his ideas*. London: Hutchinson. Pp. 190.

Rev. by Noel Annan in *NS*, Mar. 8, p. 158; by J. B. Atkins in *S*, Feb. 14, p. 210; in *TLS*, Mar. 15, p. 114.

"New & notable." *PLC*, IX, 42-45.

Records Princeton's acquisition of two Kingsley pamphlets.

Kipling. Green, R. L. "Rudyard Kipling in London: 1889-1891." *English*, VI (1946), 54-58.

Landor. *Shorter poems*. Selected and ed. by J. B. Sidgwick. Cambridge univ. pr.; New York: Macmillan. Pp. 91.

Super, Robert H. *Materials for the biography of Walter Savage Landor, 1845-64*. (Portion of Princeton univ. dissertation.) Princeton, n.d.

Lang. Green, R. L. *Andrew Lang*. London: Edmund Ward.

Rev. by Neville Braybrooke in *English*, VI, 205-6.

Lear. *The complete nonsense of Edward Lear*. Ed. Holbrook Jackson. London: Faber. Pp. xxix+288.

Rev. by Geoffrey Tillotson in *English*, VI, 306-7; by Orlo Williams in *NR*, CXXIX, 159-66; by Peter Quennell in *NS*, Aug. 30, pp. 173-74; in *TLS*, Aug. 9, p. 402 (see also p. 439).

Lecky. Hyde, H. Montgomery (ed.). *A Victorian historian: private letters of W. E. H. Lecky, 1859-1878*. London: Home & Van Thal. Pp. 90.

Rev. by Maurice Ashley in *S*, July 4, p. 22; in *TLS*, Nov. 22, pp. 597-98.

Lockhart (see also I, Sadleir). Gordon, G. S. *John Gibson Lockhart*. Glasgow: Jackson, 1944. Pp. 17.

Macaulay (see also Arnold: Templeman). Dharker, C. D. (ed.). *Lord Macaulay's legislative minutes: selected, with a historical introduction*. Madras and London: Cumberlege, 1946. Pp. viii+312.

Rev. by R. L. Schuyler in *PSQ*, LXII, 624-26.

MacDonald (see also Sewell). *George MacDonald: an anthology*. Ed. C. S. Lewis. New York: Macmillan. Pp. 128.

Mallock. Woodring, Carl R. "W. H. Mallock: a neglected wit." *More books*, XXII, 243-56.

Martineau. Rivlin, Joseph B. "Harriet Martineau: a bibliography of her separately

- printed books." *Bull. New York pub. libr.*, L (1946), 387-408, 476-98, 550-72, 789-808, 838-56, 888-908.
- Meredith** (see also II, Henkin; III, McCullough). Grantham, Evelyn. "Two letters by George Meredith." *More books*, XX (1945), 355-57.
- To André Raffalovich, a Russian-French poet, on May 19, 1884, and to George Stevenson on September 12, 1887.
- Meynell, Alice** (see also deVere: Paraclita). Chesterton, G. K. "Alice Meynell." *Dublin rev.*, No. 441 (autumn), pp. 3-12.
- Hamilton, G. Rostrevor. "Alice Meynell." *Poetry rev.*, XXXVIII, 325-30.
- Meynell, Viola. "A personal note." *Dublin rev.*, No. 441 (autumn), pp. 13-19.
- Price, Frances. "Alice Meynell and 'The essay on man.'" *N & Q*, Oct. 4, p. 430.
- Mill** (see also Ruskin: Fain). Kohn, Hans. *Prophets and peoples*. . . See VB 1946, 274. Rev. by T. W. Riker in *AHR*, LII, 291-92.
- MacMinn, N.; Hains, J. R.; and McCrimmon, J. M. *Bibliography of . . . J. S. Mill*. . . See VB 1945, 260-61.
- Rev. by W. M. Templeman in *JEGP*, XLV (1946), 115-16.
- Milnes**. Pope-Hennessy, James. "Monekton Milnes at Cambridge." *Cornhill mag.*, No. 973, pp. 27-47.
- Part of a biographical study of Milnes, to be published soon.
- Moore** (see also III, McCullough). Frierson, William C. "George Moore compromised with the Victorians." *Trollopian*, I, No. 4, 37-44.
- Hone, J. M. "George Moore and some correspondents." *Dublin mag.*, XXII, No. 1, 9-20.
- Prints some unpublished letters to Henry Tonks and to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Best, 1903-32.
- Niess, Robert J. "George Moore and Paul Alexis: the death of *La Pèlerine*." *RoR*, XXXVIII, 34-42.
- Morley**. White, William. "John Morley and A. E. H." *TLS*, Mar. 22, p. 127.
- Morris**. Cole, G. D. H. "William Morris: fifty years after." *Listener*, Oct. 10, pp. 467-68.
- Ekstrom, W. E. *The social idealism of William Morris and of William Dean Howells: a study in four Utopian novels*. (Abstract of a [Ph.D.] thesis.) Urbana, Ill. Pp. 9.
- Grennan, Margaret R. *William Morris, medievalist and revolutionary*. . . See VB 1946, 274.
- Rev. by Humphry House in *NS*, May 17, p. 358.
- Murray, David Christie**. Huish, Margaret. "David Christie Murray." *Dickensian*, XLIII, 91-92.
- Minor novelist, greatly influenced by Dickens.
- Newman** (see also I, Greenough; II, Gwynn; Kingsley: Houghton).
- Newman, John Henry. *Apologia pro vita sua: being a history of his religious opinions*. New ed., with a pref. and introd. by Charles Frederick Harrold. New York, London, Toronto: Longmans, Green. Pp. xxiv+400.
- Newman, John Henry. *An essay in aid of a grammar of assent*. New ed., with a pref. and introd. by Charles Frederick Harrold. New York, London, Toronto: Longmans, Green. Pp. xxii+394.
- Newman, John Henry. *The idea of a university defined and illustrated I. in nine discourses delivered to the Catholics of Dublin II. in occasional lectures and essays addressed to the members of the Catholic University*. New ed., with a pref. and introd. by Charles Frederick Harrold. New York, London, Toronto: Longmans, Green. Pp. xxxviii+413.
- Rev. by M. J. Healy in *CWd*, CLXVI, 279-80; by R. I. Gannon in *NYTBR*, Dec. 21, p. 4.
- The *Apologia*, the *Grammar of assent*, and the *Idea of a university*, noted above, constitute the first three volumes of a new selected edition of Newman's works. Three other titles, in six volumes, are to be published in 1948, and others later, until a set of about twenty volumes is completed. No one is better fitted to edit the set than is Professor Harrold, who is an eminent scholar of the entire Victorian period, in addition to being an authority upon Newman. He is editor of *A Newman treasury* and author of *John Henry*

Newman: an expository and critical study. . . His prefaces and introductions to these first three volumes are urbane, helpful, of wise length; they present Professor Harrold's scholarship with simple clarity and an attitude toward Newman that is both quietly sympathetic and also judicious, unbiased, broad-minded, and clear-minded.

The editor of this needed edition declares that he is making an attempt "to provide, both for the general reader and the student, the latest and best texts of those works which bid fair to stand the test of time, as well as to present anew certain of [Newman's] works which have primarily a historical interest, but which must be read or consulted if the reader wishes to understand the many-faceted mind of the author . . . an attempt at a balanced and representative set, useful alike to Catholic and non-Catholic, to students and readers and scholars of various points of view." Each of the three volumes that have appeared presents a select bibliography pertinent to it, and supplementary material, in addition to its brief preface (on the text and the general plan of the volume) and its longer introduction.

As illustration of Professor Harrold's procedure we might consider any one of these volumes. Let us take the *Apologia*. Its text proper is that of the revised, or second, edition of 1865. To this is added helpful supplementary material as follows: "Appendices I and II, the Newman-Kingsley correspondence, which appeared as a pamphlet immediately before the pamphlet-publication of the *Apologia*, and the first two pamphlets of that volume, which were later reduced and merged into a Preface."

In format and substance these three books are excellent and welcome.—W. D. Templeman.

Flanagan, Philip. *Newman: faith and the believer*. London: Sands & Co. Pp. xii+210.

Rev. in *TLS*, May 31, p. 270.

Harrold, Charles F. *John Henry Newman*. . . See VB 1946, 274.

Rev. in *TLS*, Jan. 11, p. 26.

Houghton, Walter E. *The art of Newman's "Apologia"*. . . See VB 1946, 274.

Rev. by C. F. Harrold in *MLN*, LXII, 213-15; in *TLS*, Jan. 11, p. 26.

Ong, Walter J. "Newman's essay on development in its intellectual milieu." *Theol. studies*, VII (1946), 3-45.

John Henry Newman: centenary essays. . . See VB 1945, 274.

Rev. by C. F. Harrold in *MP*, XLIV, 201-2.

Pater (see also III, Baker). Hough, Graham. "Books in general." *NS*, Nov. 29, p. 433.

Discusses Pater's progressive withdrawal from practical interests.

Tillotson, Geoffrey, "Pater, Mr. Rose, and the 'Conclusion' of the *Renaissance*," *Essays and studies by members of the English Assoc.*, XXXII (1946), 44-60.

Patmore. Price, Fanny. "Patmore, Dante, and W. H. Davies." *N & Q*, July 26, p. 316.

Powell, Thomas (see Dickens: Partington).

Reade (see also Trollope: Booth). Bond, William H. "*Nance Oldfield*: an unrecorded printed play by Charles Reade." *Harvard libr. bull.*, I, 386-87.

Burns, Wayne. "Charles Reade and the Collinses." *MLN*, LXII, 397-99.

Burns, Wayne. "*The cloister and the hearth*: a classic reconsidered." *Trollopian*, II, 71-82.

Rossetti. Gray, Nicolette. *Rossetti, Dante and ourselves*. London: Faber. Pp. 55.

Rev. by E. C. in *Connoisseur*, CXIX, 134; in *NS*, Sept. 13, p. 217; in *S*, Feb. 14, p. 218.

Explores the possibility that Rossetti, as a translator and illustrator of Dante, may have given us a false picture of both Dante and the Middle Ages.—C. F. H.

Masefield, John. *Thanks before going: notes on some of the original poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. . . See VB 1946, 275.

Rev. by Naomi Lewis in *NS*, July 20, 1946, p. 50.

Ruskin (see also I, Petrie). Clark, Sir Kenneth. *Ruskin at Oxford: an inaugural lecture*. . . Oxford: Clarendon pr. Paper. Pp. 24.

Rev. by Peter Quennell in *S*, July 25, p. 114.

A well-written and valuable analysis of Ruskin's first Slade Professor lectures, 1870-78, and of those delivered in 1883; attempts to clarify Ruskin's personal aesthetic standpoint.—C. F. H.

Dawson, A. M. P. "A Victorian prophet [John Ruskin] with a message for today." *HJ*, XLV, 253-57.

Delattre, Floris. *Ruskin et Bergson: de l'intuition esthétique à l'intuition métaphysique*. (The Zaharoff Lecture for 1947.) Oxford: Clarendon pr. Pp. 27.

Fain, John T. "John Ruskin as a political economist." *Vanderbilt univ. summ. of theses* (1945), pp. 133-52.

Fain, John T. "Ruskin and the orthodox political economists." *South. econ. jour.*, X (July, 1943), pp. 1-13.

An examination of Ruskin's indictment of political economy; includes treatment of Nassau W. Senior, J. S. Mill, James E. Cairnes; finds Ruskin's indictment sound in so far as it applies to the prostitution of political economy by politicians and industrialists.—W. D. T.

Hough, Graham. "Books in general." *NS*, Sept. 20, p. 233.

Discusses *Modern painters*.

Quennell, Peter. "The education of an aesthete," Parts I and II. *Cornhill mag.*, No. 970, pp. 249-57; No. 971, pp. 365-75.

Quennell, Peter. "Ruskin and the women." *AM*, CLXXIX, 37-45.

"Ruskin and Effie Gray. II." *Cornhill mag.*, No. 970, pp. 258-74. See VB 1946, 275.

Further extracts from unpublished letters. Editorial comment consistently hostile to the Ruskins.—A. W.

John Ruskin and Effie Gray: the story of John Ruskin, Effie Gray, and John Everett Millais, told for the first time in their unpublished letters. Ed. Admiral Sir William James. New York: Scribner; London: Murray. (English title: *The order of release*.) Pp. xii+264. *

Rev. by Frances Winwar in *NYTBR*, Dec. 21, p. 5; by J. Pope-Hennessy in *S*, Jan. 16, 1948; by George Dangerfield in *SRL*, Jan. 10, 1948, pp. 11-12.

Out of 633 letters of Ruskin and Euphemia Chalmers Gray, the editor, Effie Gray's grandson, has chosen a comparative handful with which to "vindicate" the memory of his grandmother. The result is as distorted a picture as the reader can well imagine; there is, of course, no attempt at explaining Ruskin's conduct. The value of such a publication as this is virtually nil. Indeed, the reader is inclined, by the end of the book, to feel somewhat sympathetic toward Ruskin and to desire, not a defense, but a psychological explanation of Ruskin's obvious neuroticism. Admiral

James's volume is crudely naïve, in these days of advanced understanding of neuroses and psychoses. His unwise handling of the Ruskin-Effie Gray letters suggests simply that every one of the 633 should see the light of publication as soon as possible. In the meantime, the real villainy in the whole affair will be seen, not in Ruskin, not in his wife, not in Millais, but in Ruskin's parents. Finally, in regard to literature, though there is some connection between Ruskin's warped sex life and the books he wrote, it is amazing that he accomplished so much, and of such quality, while under the agonizing tensions he experienced under the influence of his wife and his parents.—C. F. H.

Watson, R. N. "Place and picture." *TLS*, Aug. 30, p. 439.

Letter on Ruskin's aversion to photography.

Rutherford, Praz, Mario. Article on *The autobiography of Mark Rutherford*. In *Anglica: rev. di studi inglesi e americani*, Vol. I (1946), in one of the first three issues. Noted in *ES*, XXVII (1946), 191.

Saintsbury. *A Saintsbury miscellany: selections from his essays and scrap books.* . . . Oxford univ. pr. Pp. x+246. (American ed. of work published in England as *George Saintsbury: the memorial volume.* . . . See VB 1945, 275.)

Rev. by Jex Martin in *CSBW*, Jan. 19, p. 2; in *CE*, VIII, 392; by Huntington Cairns in *HTB*, Apr. 6, p. 7; by D. A. C. in *MLN*, LXII, 503-4; by D. S. Norton in *NYTBR*, Feb. 9, p. 4.

Senior, Nassau W. (see **Ruskin**: Fain).

Sewell, Anna. Parsons, Coleman O. "The progenitors of *Black beauty* in humanitarian literature." *N & Q*, Apr. 19, pp. 156-58; May 3, pp. 190-93; May 17, pp. 210-12; May 31, pp. 230-32.

The first of these four articles concerns George MacDonald's *At the back of the north wind*.

Shaw (see also III, Nethercot; **Dickens**: *Great expectations*).

Shaw, George Bernard. "Barker's wild oats." *Harper's*, CXCV, 49-53.

Brief account of Harley Granville-Barker's marriage to Lillah MacCarthy, his divorce, and his relations with Shaw.—W. I.

Geneva, Cymbeline refinished, and Good King Charles. New York: Dodd. Pp. v+233.

Rev. by W. P. Eaton in *HTB*, Oct. 25, p. 5; by J. W. Krutch in *N*, Oct. 11, p. 388; by Raymond Mortimer in *NS*, May 3, p. 317; by Brooks Atkinson in *Theatre arts*, XXXI, 74.

This volume contains little that is new. *Geneva* and *King Charles* were published as separate volumes in 1939; and *Cymbeline refinished* and its foreword, apparently in their present form, in the *London mercury*, XXXVII (1938), 372-89. The "refinishing" consists of a new fifth act, in which, retaining only eighty-nine lines of the original, Shaw substitutes a Candida-like denouement for the melodramatic recognitions and the vision in the jail. Imogen becomes a remarkably quiet, yet eloquently reproachful, Candida, and Posthumus, a feeble-minded Morell. If not quite plausible Shakespeare, the fragment is fairly good Shaw, written in blank verse which gives the effect of vigorous epigrammatic prose.

Geneva is one of Shaw's weakest plays. Apalling violence is done to historical common sense in order to heap coals of fire on the very common-sense head of the English foreign minister, Sir Orpheus Midlander, who is surely Sir Edward Grey straight out of "Common sense about the war."

King Charles is a simpler *Apple cart*, in which less vivid characters express fewer ideas with less wit and brilliance. Charles II is King Magnus placed in the past instead of the future. Posthumously chaste and generously hostile to cruelty and bloodshed, he maintains the blessings of good government and free discussion in a world torn by political greed and religious intolerance. *King Charles* is less clearly pointed toward the present than are most of Shaw's historical plays. The parallel between religious fanaticism in the seventeenth century and nationalistic fanaticism in the twentieth is not insisted on. Having gathered under Isaac Newton's roof King Charles, the Duke of York, Newton himself, the artist Godfrey Kneller, the Quaker Fox, and all the king's more distinguished mistresses, Shaw illustrates how much or how little each can learn from discussion. As a matter of fact, nobody seems to have very much to teach. The discussion seems hardly to justify the meeting of so much talent and genius, even when Einstein and twentieth-century *post factum* historical omniscience have been called into requisition.

The one novelty of the volume is a preface,

written in 1945, for *Geneva*. In its renewed faith in democracy and Anglo-Saxon political tradition, this essay continues the trend of *Everybody's political what's what*. In fact, Shaw goes so far as to prefer British dulness to German cogitation. But his preference is not very strong. There seems to be a tired indifference behind the customary vigor of expression. One feels that the author has very few illusions. Dictators are nearly always clever and usually bad. Democrats are hardly ever clever. Attlee's Laborites are just as utopian as MacDonald's were. The counterpart to this tired pessimism is a tired, deprecatory, grandfatherly optimism. The Nazi atrocities occurred through mere inefficiency. Democracy fails through sheer ignorance. The world is too shabby and mean a place to have anything very big wrong with it. It may therefore improve considerably. But Shaw seems weary of history, of having old ideas about new events. He yawns a little, even over the atom bomb.—William Irvine.

Bentley, Eric. *Bernard Shaw: a reconsideration.* ("Makers of modern literature series.")

New York: New directions. Pp. xxv+242.

A very able, compressed, and well-informed essay in Shavian apologetics. The author defends Shaw against his critics, particularly against his liberal and Marxist critics, and, in so doing, explains his socialism, politics, ethics, religion, and, of course, his plays. In my opinion Mr. Bentley sees Shaw the thinker as a little more omniscient and a great deal more coherent than he actually is. Certainly, Shaw is a pragmatist. Certainly, he "slants" his statements with a view to maximum impact on his audience. But a man can be so sensitive to his audience, so flexible in his tactics, as to become ambiguous in his fundamental principles. An inquiry into the various and often contradictory meanings which Shaw gives such expressions as "free will," "liberty," "idealism," and "duty" would lend greater point and soundness to Mr. Bentley's discussion, excellent as it is, of Shaw the moralist and the political economist. On Shaw the dramatist Mr. Bentley is admirable, tracing with remarkable acumen and insight the manifold variations of related themes, the complexities of Shavian inversion, the conflicts between realist and romantic, vitalist and melodramatic conventionalist, man of action and man of speculation. The synthesis is sharp without being artificial. Shavian drama is given a striking degree of unity without being locked up in a formula. Mr. Bentley has made his hero too in-

fallible to seem himself infallible to his critics, and yet he has performed a valuable service. Shaw was criticized long before he was understood. He still needs understanding and explanation; and these Mr. Bentley has given him.—William Irvine.

Bissell, Claude. "The novels of George Bernard Shaw." *TQ*, XVII, 38–51.

Gatch, Katherine Haynes. "The real sorrow of great men: Mr. Bernard Shaw's sense of tragedy." *CE*, VIII, 230–40.

Hobsbawm, E. J. "Bernard Shaw's socialism." *Sci. & soc.*, XI, 305–26.

Irvine, William. "Bernard Shaw's early novels." *Trollopian*, II, 27–42.

Irvine, William. "Man and Superman, a step in Shavian disillusionment," *HLQ*, X, 209–24.

"Speranza" (Lady Wilde). Wyndham, Horace. "Speranza' and her first editor." *English*, VI (1946), 73–77.

Interesting item in Victorian Irish journalism.

Stevenson (see also I, Petrie; III, Richardson, Sampson, Speaight).

Novels and stories by Robert Louis Stevenson. Selected with an introd. by V. S. Pritchett. New York: Duell, 1946. Pp. xv+615.

Rev. by John Farrelly in *New R*, Aug. 4, p. 31; by Frank Sullivan in *NYTBR*, May 18, p. 4. Reprints *Weir of Hermiston*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, *Kidnapped*, *Travels with a donkey*, "Thrawn Janet," "The beach of Falesa," and "The suicide club."

Selected writings of Robert Louis Stevenson. Ed. with an introd. by Saxe Commins. New York: Random. Pp. xxxi+1197.

Rev. in *HTB*, Apr. 6, p. 25; by J. D. Lindquist in *LJ*, Apr. 15, p. 645; by John Farrelly in *New R*, Aug. 4, p. 31; by Frank Sullivan in *NYTBR*, May 18, p. 4.

Daiches, David. *Robert Louis Stevenson.* ("Makers of modern literature series.") New York: New directions. Pp. x+196.

Rev. by Edith Finch in *NYTBR*, Jan. 4, 1948, p. 5.

Dodds, M. H. "Stevenson, 'The bottle imp.'" *N & Q*, Jan. 11, p. 21. See VB 1946, 276.

Fennell, E. F. "Description of Alan Breck." *N & Q*, Feb. 8, p. 59.

An official contemporary description.

Hill, R. W. "Gabriel Wells bequest." *Bull. New York pub. libr.*, LI, 320–24.

Includes description of twelve letters from Stevenson written to J. T. Mowbray, an Edinburgh barrister, between May, 1887, and February, 1888.

Pleadwell, F. L. "Stevenson's cruise in the *Casco*." *N & Q*, Aug. 23, p. 367.

A query.

Surtees (see also **Trollope**: Burn). R., G. R. B. "The sporting novels of Robert Smith Surtees." *More books*, XIX (1944), 363–64.

Swinburne (see also **Browning**: Knickerbocker). Grantham, Evelyn. "Letters from Symonds to Swinburne." *More books*, XXI (1946), 212–21.

Concerning six previously unpublished letters written between 1872 and 1882.

Hare, Humphrey. "Studies in genius. III. Swinburne and 'le vice anglais.'" *Horizon*, XVI, 268–89.

Enthusiastic critical and psychological analysis of the poet's temperament and literary abilities.

Symonds (see **Swinburne**: Grantham).

Tennyson (see also, III, Spender; **Brownings**: Long, Sessions; **deVere**: Paraclita).

Fairchild, Hoxie N. "Tennyson and Shelley." *TLS*, Jan. 11, p. 23.

Haight, Gordon S. "Tennyson's Merlin." *SP*, XLIV, 549–66.

Murray, John. "Croker on Tennyson." *TLS*, Jan. 18, p. 37.

Nicolson, Harold. *Tennyson's two brothers.* (The Leslie Stephen lecture, 1947.) Cambridge univ. pr. Pp. 35.

Shaunon, Edgar F. "The proofs of *Gareth and Lynette* in the Widener collection." *BSP*, XLI, 321–40.

Description of proof sheets of the idyll and a printing of 97 holograph lines of the poem.

Stocking, Fred H. "Tennyson's 'Tears, idle tears.'" *Er*, V, No. 8, item 54.

Strout, Alan Lang. "Croker and Tennyson again." *N & Q*, July 26, pp. 317-18; Nov. 15, pp. 498-99.

Croker was angry when the *Quarterly review* "repudiated" his 1833 criticism by praising Tennyson's 1842 volume!—A. W.

T., C. B. "Gabriel Wells." *Yale libr. gaz.*, XXI, 53-54.

Records Yale's acquisition of a portion of the manuscript of *Vivien*.

Thackeray (see also I, Greenough; II, Henkin; III, McCullough). Benét, Laura. *Thackeray of the great heart and humorous pen*. New York: Dodd. Pp. viii+382.

Rev. by M. L. Becker in *HTB*, Nov. 16, p. 20; by N. B. B. in *NYTBR*, Nov. 16, p. 43; in *SRL*, Nov. 15, p. 58.

Designed for young readers; excellent on the facts of Thackeray's life, his career, and his environment, within the limits of the author's scope and intention.—C. F. H.

Cline, C. L. "A Thackeray forgery." *Univ. of Texas libr. chron.*, II, 187-89.

Cohen, J. A. W. "Thackeray's reviewers." *TLS*, March 22, p. 127.

Gordan, John D. "William Makepeace Thackeray: 1811-1863." *Bull. New York pub. libr.*, LI, 259-96.

Catalogue of an extensive exhibition of first editions, association copies, manuscripts, autograph letters, and original drawings, drawn from the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection. Biographical notes.

House, Humphrey. "Thackeray and Lucas." *TLS*, Aug. 23, p. 427.

House, Humphrey. "Thackeray's letters." *TLS*, Nov. 22, p. 603.

(Letter to editor regarding errors in transcription in Gordon Ray's ed. of the letters.) See also *TLS*, Dec. 6, p. 629; Dec. 13, p. 645; Dec. 27, p. 675.

Ray, Gordon N. (ed.). *The letters and private papers of William Makepeace Thackeray*. . . See VB 1946, 276.

Rev. by B. Ifor Evans in *CR*, CLXXII, 186-87; in *DJ*, XXXIX, 39-41, and XL, 28-29; by J. A. W. Cohen in *FR*, CLXII, 235-36; by G. L. Marsh in *MP*, XLIV, 281-84; by Michael

Sadler in *NC*, CXLII, 82-84; by Raymond Mortimer in *NS*, Aug. 2, p. 94; in *QR*, CCLXXXV, 626-27; by Bonamy Dobrée in *S*, Aug. 29, pp. 276, 278; in *TLS*, June 14, p. 297 (see Mr. Ray's letter, p. 365); by Michael Sadler in *Trollopian*, II, 107-15; by J. S. Wilson in *VQR*, XIII, 282-86; by G. S. Haight in *YR*, XXXVI, 557-59.

Stevenson, Lionel. *The showman of Vanity Fair: the life of William Makepeace Thackeray*. Illus. from drawings by Thackeray. London: Chapman & Hall; New York: Scribner's. Pp. 405.

Rev. in *Amer. merc.*, LXIV, 634; in *CE*, VIII, 391; by G. N. Ray in *CSBW*, Feb. 9, p. 14; by J. J. Reilly in *CWD*, CLXV, 186; by G. F. Whicher in *HTB*, Jan. 12, p. 5; by K. T. Willis in *LJ*, Jan. 1, p. 75; by H. M. Jones in *NYTBR*, Feb. 16, p. 6; by Bonamy Dobrée in *S*, Dec. 12, p. 745; by G. S. Haight in *SRL*, Feb. 8, pp. 10-12; in *TLS*, Dec. 20, p. 659; in *Trollopian*, II, 120; by J. S. Wilson in *VQR*, XXIII, 282-86; by E. K. Brown in *YR*, XXXVI, 753-55.

Professor Stevenson, biographer of two other nineteenth-century novelists, Lady Morgan and Charles Lever, depicts a considerable phase of England in Thackeray's times as he presents the life of the great satiric humorist. This third biography follows the style of his two earlier ones, and of his *Darwin among the poets* (1932), in having no annotation—a regrettable fact for many students. But, like his earlier volumes, this is written throughout with great scholarly care, and he might have presented his sources in a very large number of notes, sometimes five or six to a page. The work will be welcomed in the scholarly world of literature, for a satisfying full-length portrait of Thackeray has been long needed. Then, too, a large number of comments, articles, and books had been published about him and his work, and these needed synthesizing. This book answers both needs. Strict and arduous scholarship has gone into the gathering and sifting of material for it, with wide knowledge supporting experienced judgment; and a remarkably fluent yet unornate style of writing has aided in the production of a book noteworthy for vividness and thoroughness. (Incidentally, the recently published Thackeray letters, edited by Gordon Ray, do not seem to add information that would make necessary any revision in Stevenson's biography.)

The work is written in an objective style. Thackeray's own writings and the letters, diaries,

books, and other writings of people who knew him are employed in order to give a firsthand account; moreover, it presents Thackeray's weaknesses fully as well as his virtues; and, finally, there is objectivity by reason of thoroughness, for a vast number of details are given and no essential ones are withheld.

Yet the book is not dull, and the reader with an interest in Thackeray or in nineteenth-century England and America will enjoy it. Some bits of enjoyment are conveyed by the effective reproduction of many of the novelist's own humorous sketches. The reader will learn much of Thackeray's life from this well-rounded account, and he will surely gain new understanding and appreciation of Thackeray's literary products.—W. D. Templeman.

T., C. B. "Notes on recent acquisitions." *Yale libr. gaz.*, XXII, 17.

Announces Yale's acquisition of a manuscript notebook with materials for *The Virginians*; six sheets in Thackeray's hand of chapter v of *The adventures of Philip*, Volume II; a seventh sheet with a genealogy of Philip; and an edition of Sterne's *Sentimental journey* with a long inscription signed by Thackeray.

Touster, Eva Beach. "The literary relationship of Thackeray and Fielding." *JEGP*, XLVI, 383-94.

Weitenkampf, Frank. "Thackeray, illustrator." *Bull. New York pub. libr.*, LI, 640-43.

Related to article by John D. Gordan listed above.

Thompson, Francis. Kawa, Elizabeth. *Der Jagdhund des Himmels*. [Übertragen und eingeleitet.] Berlin: Morus, [1946].

Trollope (see also I, Greenough, Sadleir; Dickens: Stevenson; Hardy: Fletcher). *An autobiography*. Introd. by Bradford A. Booth. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California pr. Pp. xxii+312.

Rev. by J. T. Frederick in *CSBW*, June 29, p. 4; by M. E. Chase in *NYTBR*, Dec. 14, p. 5; by B. R. Redman in *SRL*, July 26, p. 30; in *TLS*, May 18, 1946, p. 237.

Distinguished by a very readable and perceptive introduction, which deals with Trollope not only in relation to his own times but also in terms of Ellen Glasgow, Charles Morgan, and

other present-day writers. Besides this excellent introductory essay, Professor Booth has supplied a detailed index. The University of California Press is to be congratulated on turning out a book of such admirable format, type, and paper.—C. F. H.

A., T. "Further Trollope queries." *N & Q*, Oct. 4, p. 435.

Alexander, D. M. "Trollope's cosmopolitanism." *Trollopian*, II, 3-10.

Blair, Frederick G. "Trollope on education: an unpublished address." *Trollopian*, I, No. 4, 1-9.

Booth, Bradford A. "Trollope, Reade, and *Shilly-Shally*," Parts I and II. *Trollopian*, I, No. 4, 45-54; II, 43-52.

Booth, Bradford A. "Trollope's letters." *TLS*, June 28, p. 323.

Bowen, Elizabeth. *Anthony Trollope: a new judgment*. . . See VB 1946, 277.

Rev. by Bernard DeVoto in *Harper's*, CXIV, 222-23; in *Trollopian*, II, 53-54.

Box, H. Oldfield. *The warden of Hiram's hospital*. Reading and London: Crowther, 1946. Pp. 65.

Burn, W. L. "Surtees and Trollope." *Blackwood's*, CCLXI, 301-7.

C., R. W. "Framley parsonage." *N & Q*, Sept. 6, p. 391; Oct. 18, p. 459.

C., R. W.; White, L. R. B.; Teare, Charles A.; and Fox, E. M. "Trollope's Cloe." *N & Q*, Apr. 5, p. 150; May 17, p. 218; June 14, p. 263.

Query and replies.

Cecil, Beatrice. "The Trollopes." *TLS*, Sept. 6, p. 451.

Chapman, R. W. "A reading of Trollope." *TLS*, Aug. 30, p. 439.

Clinton-Baddeley, V. C. "Letter to the editor." *Trollopian*, I, No. 4, 55.

Etherington, Michael. "Letter to the editor." *Trollopian*, II, 53.

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- Hoyt, Norris D. "Can you forgive her? A commentary." *Trollopian*, II, 57-70.
- Sadleir, Michael. "Luke Fildes." *TLS*, Apr. 5, p. 157.
Reply to D. P. Whitely (see below) regarding Trollope illustrations.
- Sadleir, Michael. *Trollope: a commentary*. Rev. ed. New York: Farrar, Straus. Pp. 435.
Rev. by Howard Vincent in *CSBW*, Feb. 23, p. 8; by Raymond Mortimer in *NS*, Apr. 19, p. 277; by W. B. C. Watkins in *NYTBR*, Feb. 16, p. 6; by R. E. Roberts in *SRL*, Apr. 26, p. 20; by E. K. Brown in *YR*, XXXVI, 753-55.
A new and improved edition of the book, which was first published in 1927. Though it contains little fresh material, this edition has been considerably improved and simplified. The first twenty pages of chapter i, "The voice of an epoch," is an admirable evocation of the best decades of Victoria's reign.—C. F. H.
- Smalley, Donald. "Trollope's folly." *Indiana quart. for bookmen*, XII (1946), 107-14.
- Taylor, Robert H. "The manuscript of Trollope's *American senator*." *BSP*, XLI, 123-39.
Mr. Taylor has collated the manuscript "with the first edition . . . and . . . checked the discrepancies with the serial publication in the magazine *Temple Bar* . . . and with the edition printed for the Trollope Society." His list of variants would be better arranged if he had listed separately those few cases in which the manuscript could be thought to give a reading preferable to that of the first (or of some other) edition; as it is, he has buried significant manuscript variants in a morass of insignificant ones (such as printer's corrections of Trollope's spelling).—W. F.
- Tinker, Chauncey Brewster. "Trollope." *YR*, XXXVI, 424-34.
"They knew Trollope." *Trollopian*, II, 117-18.
"Trollope's copy of Browning." *Trollopian*, II, 119.
- Wheatley, Vera. *Scandal in Barchester*. London: French. Pp. 94.
A Trollopian play produced in London in 1946.
- Whiteley, D. Pepys. "Luke Fildes." *TLS*, Apr. 5, p. 157.
Letter regarding erroneous attribution of Fildes as illustrator for Trollope's *The way we live now*. See Michael Sadleir's reply on same page; also p. 183.
- Ward, Mrs. Humphry. Lewis, Naomi. "Books in general." *NS*, Aug. 23, p. 152.
Analyzes Mrs. Ward's abilities and interests. Values Mrs. Ward as a social historian.
- Wilde (see also III, Baker, Nethercot; "Speranza").
- Agate, James. *Oscar Wilde and the theater. Masque*, No. 3. London: Curtain pr. Pp. 23.
Rev. in *TLS*, Aug. 2, p. 393.
"An unwise forgery." *PLC*, VIII, 90-91, 191.
A supposed Wilde forgery at Princeton.
- Wilson, Edmund. "Oscar Wilde: 'One must always seek what is most tragic.'" *New Yorker*, June 29, 1946, pp. 65-68, 70.
- Wyndham, Horace. "When Oscar Wilde was editor." *LL*, LV, 201-4.
Anecdotes about the periodical *Woman's world*.
- Yeats. Alspach, Russell K. "Two songs of Yeats," *MLN*, LXI (1946), 395-400.
- Alspach, Russell K. "The use by Yeats and other Irish writers of the folklore of Patrick Kennedy." *Jour. Amer. folklore*, LIX (1946), 404-12.
- Healy, J. V. "Yeats and his imagination." *SeR*, LIV (1946), 650-59.
- Ure, Peter. *Towards a mythology: studies in the poetry of W. B. Yeats*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946. Pp. 120.
Rev. by J. B. Leishman in *RES*, XXIII, 372-74.
- Witt, Marion. "Yeats' *Mohini Chatterjee*." *Ex*, IV (1946), item 60.
- Yeats, J. B. *Letters to his son, W. B. Yeats*. . . . See VB 1946, 278.
Rev. by Babette Deutsch in *Poetry*, LXIX, 291-95.

DISCUSSION

"A 'NEW' READING OF *OTHELLO*": A REPLY TO MR. STOLL

MR. STOLL's interesting objections to my article on *Othello* serve to place in comparison the methodological and critical principles which underlie my article and his reply. I should like, therefore, to use the opportunity offered by the fact that Mr. Stoll has taken sufficient interest in my analysis of the play to take issue with it, in order to raise certain questions concerning analytical procedure which have a bearing on the general problem of Shakespeare criticism. I should like, specifically, to make explicit certain general assumptions which distinguish his approach to the play from mine, even where we may be in agreement on specific points, and also to indicate my approval of certain general principles, even though Mr. Stoll makes them the basis of an important part of his criticism.

Mr. Stoll's general criticisms of my article on *Othello* appear to be two: (1) I assume that "character is destiny" and (2) I disregard the initial postulates on which the play is based. It is difficult to decide which of these criticisms disturbs me more, since in any debate involving the principles implied by them I should find myself on Mr. Stoll's side. I do not take the position that in Shakespeare's tragedies character is destiny. As commonly used, the phrase is little more than a vague formula, and, in any case, the ideas suggested by it are not useful in the consideration of problems primarily dramatic. I approach character in *Othello* as an element of probability in a dramatic action. This is quite different from saying that character is destiny. In developing his other major criticism, Mr. Stoll elaborates, with excellent illustrations from a number of critics, the principle that in the analysis of imaginative works it is essential to accept the author's initial postulates. With this I cannot disagree, and I take the principle for granted in the analysis of *Othello*. I assume that the character of the hero is one of these postulates,

to be considered as one of the *données*, along with the circumstances in which the dramatist places the character as defined. My article is concerned with the problem of the dynamic relationship between these two sorts of postulates in *Othello*.

I fail, it is true, to mention explicitly certain details noted by Mr. Stoll in his first two paragraphs. It does not follow that I consider them "of no importance." The article does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the play as a whole. One aspect is isolated—the character of Othello in relation to the stages of the action. In consequence, such factors in the action as Iago are held constant in relation to Othello considered as variable. It is perhaps because Mr. Stoll has not distinguished between the method demanded by a specific problem and an over-all theory of tragedy that he finds me committed to the notion that "character is destiny" and objects because I ground the "tragedy wholly upon character and the situation." My analysis takes for granted the villainy of Iago, without which there could not have been this particular tragedy, and indicates the nature of the villain's action; but, since the primary concern is the particular response of Othello to Iago's machinations in the light of what has been established about the hero's character, it is not necessary to discuss the problem of Iago as such. Similarly with Desdemona. When Mr. Stoll objects that I ground the tragedy "wholly upon character and the situation," he apparently narrows the meaning of "situation," as I do not, to exclude Iago and Desdemona, just as he seems to when he writes: "And, Iago apart, the explanation is, as above, but 'the pressure of events.'" It is not a matter of Iago apart. The actions of Iago and Desdemona are a conspicuous part of the situation and the circumstances which face Othello. How could it be otherwise?

Mr. Stoll's difficulties with one of the essen-

tial points of my discussion may be blamed on an unfortunate detail in the diction which could be misleading. In the preliminary discussion appears the phrase, "no new factor introduced about character, no action of the character however surprising, does violence to what is already known about it." Later in the article appears the statement, "the murder of Desdemona does violence to the real Othello." The appearance of the word "violence" in both might encourage the conclusion that there is a contradiction between the original generalization and the findings of the analysis. In the context of the whole argument, however, the contradiction to which Mr. Stoll calls attention is not real. It is a major point of the article that, in his judgment and murder of Desdemona, Othello's conduct conforms to characteristic traits—his resentment of dishonorable conduct on the part of those he trusts, his honesty, his belief in dispassionate justice based on evidence. However, because Othello's mind is distorted by the passions aroused by Iago and because he is, at the same time, faced with a domestic situation unfamiliar to him (this may be one sense in which the marriage may be regarded as "risky"), these established noble traits function perversely and abnormally. In this sense, Othello's terrible act does violence to his real self: "under the pressure of circumstances the essential Othello is wholly debased and degraded." I believe that if Mr. Stoll were able to accept my procedure in principle, the most serious difficulty he would have found here would have been a verbal one.

Apparently, however, there are certain fundamental differences in our approaches to the play which no amount of mutual agreement or reconciliation on details can serve to overcome. In connection with Othello's brutal treatment of his wife, Mr. Stoll asks rhetorically: "Why on such evidence . . . without attempting an inquiry or bringing charges, thus judge, and condemn, and kill her?" I labored at some length to answer that "why"; yet Mr. Stoll's comment seems to imply not that I failed to answer the question satisfactorily but that I failed to raise it at all. On another occasion, commenting on the use of "paradox" in describing Othello's suicide, he remarks: "If ever

in tragedy the death of the hero by his own hand was logical, it is here." How completely in agreement we are! Yet the statement is intended as a reproach. We seem to be each pursuing a different "logic." Though we are both concerned with discovering an order in these plays, we apparently do not look for exactly the same kind of order.

When Mr. Stoll criticizes me for neglecting the postulates of the play, he cites, first of all, Iago's lines about the hero. This description of the hero by the villain is important; but I do not, as Mr. Stoll seems to think I should, regard it as the absolute definition of Othello's character, simply because the unfolding of the action presents many circumstances which cannot be adequately interpreted by it. My procedure in this matter would be regarded as improper by a significant school of modern Shakespearean scholars and critics, who assume it as a principle of sound critical method in interpreting Shakespeare, as well as other Elizabethan dramatists, that comments by other characters (including the villain) about the hero must be allowed a literal and absolute validity, these presumably being, not the opinions of particular characters, but the revealed word of the author which it would be a heresy to regard in any other way.¹ On the same basis the postulate about Iago is that he is honest, yet it turns out that he is not honest. For some reason the critical principle will not hold for Iago as it must for Othello. The fact is, however, that it does not work for Othello either. If interpretation is guided simply by Iago's assertion that Othello "thinks men honest if they but seem to be so," it is a little difficult to explain why Iago's first attack on Othello fails, and it is impossible to explain Othello's later actions. Othello suspects Cassio. He suspects even Desdemona, who "seems" so honest that, though greatly disturbed by Iago's initial insinuations, Othello has only to see Desdemona to doubt his ancient's accusations: "I'll not believe't." What is more, he will not accept the

¹ The classic statement of this view is Levin Schücking's *Character problems in Shakespeare's plays* (English translation [London, 1922]). Muriel Bradbrook's *Themes and conventions in Elizabethan drama* (Cambridge, 1935) arrives at somewhat similar principles for Elizabethan drama generally.

word of the "honest" Iago and threatens him with unnamed violence if he does not produce "ocular proof." In short, to adhere to Iago's statement as the ultimate postulate of the play is to reduce the play to triviality and destroy much of what makes it vital and memorable. To discover the postulates about Othello, it is necessary to go beyond these words of Iago and seek them in what Othello says and does in the opening scenes of the play. It is requisite to grant every narrator his premises, but the means through which these are revealed will vary with individual cases. Shakespeare's tragedies are, after all, not *Märchen*.

A further difference in method is suggested by Mr. Stoll's comments on Othello's suicide: "In Renaissance tragedy, Elizabethan or Continental, the death of the hero was *de rigueur* . . .," a generalization which he follows with a brief account of the conventions which demanded Othello's death by his own hand. If I understand the implications of this discussion correctly, the logic which Mr. Stoll seeks to establish here is that imposed on the play by the conventional characteristics of a particular dramatic genre or style, established by a comparison of the given play with other similar or analogous plays in terms of their common elements. The emphasis in my approach is almost the reverse. The conventions used by a dramatist are dictated by the nature of his medium (the kind of playing area used, for example) and by the practice of his predecessors and contemporaries. He accepts these, but, especially if he is a great dramatist, he deals with them in his own way and may even vary them. My concern is therefore with the unique elements in the play, not with what it has in common with others, assuming that the conventions are sufficiently understood to make appropriate comprehension possible. The difference is suggested by my comment on Othello's death: "The suicide thus fits into the pattern of probabilities which govern the play and which give to the conventional death of the tragic hero the inevitability of complete necessity." If ever, in other words, the death of a hero by his own hand is logical, it is here. But it is not simply the logic of Renaissance tragedy (the conventional death of the tragic hero),

which does not explain this particular act, but the logic of the unique probabilities which operate in *Othello* (the inevitability of complete necessity). The word "paradox," to which Mr. Stoll objects in this connection, does not convey the idea that the suicide is illogical but characterizes the general effect of the resolution of this, as of many other good plays, which combines the element of surprise or unlikelihood in view of the opening circumstances with a sense of inevitability in view of the intervening developments.²

These general differences in method will help, in part, to explain why there must necessarily be some disagreement between us, even though in the matter of the two general principles first considered I am in accord with Mr. Stoll. It is useful to make these essential differences clear, since to obscure them would work to the detriment of whatever advantages my method might possess in illuminating Shakespeare. And it would be an equal disservice on the other side, obscuring the advantages present in the methods employed by Mr. Stoll, whose numerous discussions of Shakespeare I have often found illuminating and always stimulating.

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² The other use of the word "paradox," to which Mr. Stoll objects, involves a point less basic to the main argument of the article. The phrase, "excellent wretch," is unquestionably a term of endearment. It is also, nonetheless, a paradox, or oxymoron, in form. The makeup of the phrase, considering the words in their literal meanings, is not all that is involved, however. Shakespeare's use of language is often of the sort that does not receive its final explanation by consulting Schmidt or any good glossary. Othello uses the expression immediately after Desdemona has made her first plea for Cassio's reinstatement. Othello's replies during this scene indicate that he is disturbed by the request. It is inevitable that he should be; for, while being sure that his original decision was professionally necessary and right, he feels at the same time a disinclination to deny any request of Desdemona's. Under the circumstances the expression of affection is not free of suggestions, however slight, of the perturbation which the conversation has produced in Othello. When words or phrases ordinarily derogatory are used as terms of endearment, there is almost always conveyed a slight suggestion of inferiority or diminution of stature. The setting of the phrase in the play gives this quality more prominence than a more neutral context would, particularly as the expression is of a character different from the terms of affection employed by Othello before this scene (II, 2, 186-200; II, 3, 250, 252; III, 3, 55).

BOOK REVIEWS

On the composition of "Paradise lost." By ALLAN H. GILBERT. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947. Pp. x+185.

The method employed by Mr. Gilbert is one recently brought into prominence by Josephine Bennett, in her very illuminating study of Spenser: the examination of real or apparent inconsistencies within a long poem and their comparison with available external evidence, in order to establish the process of composition. The most striking difference between the two applications of the method is that the earlier sought the cause of relative failure (Mrs. Bennett believes that *The Faerie Queene* is torn by the competition of two rival plot foci), while the present inquiry is concerned only with the process by which success was achieved (Mr. Gilbert insists that, "so far as pleasure is concerned," the inconsistencies to which he directs attention are "not . . . even dust in the balance").

Mr. Gilbert starts with Grant McColley's theory that, before deciding upon the epic form, Milton had actually written a tragedy on the subject of *Paradise lost*. He then attempts to determine what portions of the present poem formed part of the lost play, using as his criterion for inclusion the assumption that the scene of the play must necessarily have been laid in Eden. The most important exclusion is the matter of Hell ("a less developed counterpart" of the matter of Heaven "probably appeared in the drama" in the dialogue given to certain personified characters). When Milton changed his plan, he devised new scenes invited by the epic form. "One may say, then, that Milton took a play and made it into a heroic poem by adding half-extraneous material. The new parts, vital to *Paradise Lost* as we now have it, are not vital to the story of man's Fall. The parts relating to Satan are not part of the primary plot but form a subplot."

Having laid down this hypothesis, Mr. Gilbert turns for support to certain inconsisten-

cies in the poem whose presence can be explained, he thinks, only as the result of incorporation into the epic of already wrought dramatic material.

Regarding his theory as established, Mr. Gilbert next attempts to determine, by the examination of further inconsistencies, the process by which the transformed tragedy became the present epic. First, there was a poem, organized chronologically, of about two-thirds the present length. The war in Heaven, narrated directly by the poet, was followed by the matter of the present Books I and II. Between the present Books II and III was the story of creation, again narrated directly by the poet. There followed Satan's arrival in Eden and his temporary withdrawal, and a very brief visit by Raphael, during which he warned Adam against Satan (but, of course, without the narrative of the war in Heaven) and listened to Adam's own story; thereafter the poem proceeded much as at present.

But Milton found the chronological order unsatisfactory: half the poem was over before man appeared. The next stage was therefore a reorganization achieved by removing the war in Heaven and the story of creation from their original positions and assigning them to Raphael's visit, in substitution for the brief warning he had originally spoken. "The poem, though unfinished, now had the order we know."

The final stage in the evolution of the poem was the insertion of new material and the further modification of old. The most important insertions were the demonic council of Book II, the theological lessoning of Book III (the equivalent material in Books XI and XII, and scattered throughout the poem, had been composed earlier), and the person and role of Abdiel. The most important modifications were of Satan's motive for rebellion (from such general pride as could "allow Omnipotence to none," and therefore rebelled against the

Father's ordinary rule, to jealousy at the incarnation of the Son), and of the nature of the war in Heaven (from a decisive struggle between the hosts of Satan and Michael, in which the latter is victorious, to an indecisive struggle followed by the single-handed victory of the Son).

Mr. Gilbert's confidence in his procedure is so great that he has felt able to reduce his findings to precise mathematical form. The content of *Paradise lost* is distributed among six tables, representing six stages of composition (dates, it is true, are not attempted). The first group consists of those parts of the poem which derive from work done on early tragedies of the Fall, the second from early tragedies on other subjects, the third from the lost tragedy, and the remaining three from the three stages of the epic.

It is unnecessary to emphasize the importance these conclusions would have if they could be accepted. We should be able to recover Milton's precise intentions with a certainty hitherto impossible, and we should know all that could be wished about his method of work.

It is therefore almost disappointing to have to report that Mr. Gilbert's conclusions cannot be regarded as established. His whole argument depends upon the assumption that Milton had actually written a tragedy on the subject of the Fall and that this tragedy was subsequently lost. What, then, is the evidence for a lost tragedy? In his *Life*, Edward Phillips, speaking of *Paradise lost*, writes: "This Subject was first designed a Tragedy, and in the Fourth Book of the Poem there are Ten Verses, which several Years before the Poem was begun, were shewn to me, and some others, as designed for the very beginning of the said Tragedy." He then quotes the opening lines of Satan's address to the sun (IV, 32-41). Since none of Milton's four preserved plans for a tragedy begin with Satan, there must, says Mr. Gilbert, have been a fifth plan which did. And if it began with the fallen angel, its action must have proceeded chronologically to the expulsion. And since Milton wrote ten lines of such a tragedy, and was interested in the sub-

ject for many years, he probably wrote more—indeed, all of it. It has not, however, been customary to regard Phillips as an infallible witness. And even if his statement is accepted, his phrase "the very beginning" may as well mean that Satan's address was a prologue as that it initiated the action (the third draft in the Cambridge MS specifies a prologue, and the fourth, which does not, ends with the note, "compare this with the former draught," which is sometimes taken to indicate that it, too, intended a prologue). And if more than the ten lines which he quotes had been written for a tragedy, it is very strange that Phillips (who claims to have "had the perusal of it from the very beginning; for some years, as I went from time to time, to Visit him, in a Parcel of Ten, Twenty, or Thirty Verses at a Time") should have reported this single passage as a curiosity, and ignored the thousands of other lines which Mr. Gilbert contends were similarly treated. Altogether, it would seem that Phillips' statement, which is the sole basis for the theory of a lost tragedy, may be used against, quite as well as for, such a theory.

What of the collateral evidence, the inconsistencies which can be explained only on the assumption that material already wrought for the stage was incorporated, with inadequate revision, into the poem? The "inconsistency" to which Mr. Gilbert pays most attention is the difference between the "heroic" Satan seen in Hell and Heaven, and the "unheroic" Satan seen in the Garden. The latter, he argues, was conceived first, and was worked out to suit the needs of the tragedy, remaining within the limitations of stage presentation; the former is a purely epic conception, rising out of the change in plan. "So far as this Satan, standing for the universal power of evil, is not to be reconciled with the villain of the garden-tragedy, a critic cannot arrive at a unified characterization of the Adversary. Milton brought the two conceptions—never wholly diverse—into such agreement as his purpose required, but not further. . . ." (One is tempted to ask whether his purpose *ought* not to have required an antagonist who could be understood, and whether failure to apprehend Satan single and whole would not have amounted to something

more than that "dust in the balance" which Mr. Gilbert has repudiated.) Mr. Gilbert is not entirely unaware of the assumption which underlies his view of "two Satans" who are "as distinct as their different settings indicate." He refers to it, once, in a footnote: "The well-known . . . idea of Satan's progressive degeneration" is, he thinks, "untenable"; he does not say why. In the absence of such explanation, the idea (that just as Satan's initial stature represents the vast power of evil, so his deterioration represents its progressive effect) will probably continue to be "well-known" and, one might add, widely held, particularly in view of the pains Milton has taken to advance it:

his form had yet not lost
All her Original brightness . . . [I, 591-92].

the bitter memorie
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue [IV, 24-26].

While they adore me on the Throne of Hell,
With Diadem and Scepter high advanc'd
The lower still I fall . . . [IV, 89-91].

Neither Phillips' statement, therefore, nor the "inconsistencies" within the poem with which Mr. Gilbert supports his daring deductions therefrom, can be regarded as demonstrating the existence of a lost tragedy; and with the lost tragedy goes Mr. Gilbert's whole framework of analysis. This, however, is not to say that all Mr. Gilbert's findings must be rejected. Saltatory composition in so large a work is certainly probable. If we cannot accept that major portion of Mr. Gilbert's study which is concerned with an assumed evolution from tragedy to what he calls the "second stage" of the epic, his examination of what he calls the "last stage of evolution" is independent of this hypothesis and is very suggestive. Briefly, it may be said that his argument for the late insertion of Abdiel achieves a high probability, and that the late modification of the war in Heaven and the late insertion of the demonic council seem fairly probable.

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The rime of the Ancient Mariner. By SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. With an essay by ROBERT PENN WARREN. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946. Pp. [vi] + 148.

The Ancient Mariner is one of those poems the interpretations of which have rather illustrated the different methods of interpretation than explained the poem itself. Mr. Warren's essay seems to me to be valuable principally as exhibiting what happens to poetry in interpretation, and not particularly valuable as a comment upon the poem.

His argument may be summarized as follows. The famous passage in the *Table talk*, recording Mrs. Barbauld's criticism of the poem and the poet's response, may not be taken as evidence that the poem is without theme or moral. Mr. Warren is severe, thus, with Griggs and with Lowes. The former has, according to Mr. Warren, first "misread his text," since he interprets the passage as excluding a moral intention and, second, asserts that the poem is without theme or meaning. The latter asserts that the poem has a theme but "reverses his argument" in considering that it has no moral or, at any rate, none which will "hold water" outside the poem. Both men consequently make the poem "nothing more than a pleasant but meaningless dream." Yet dreams in Coleridge's view contain nothing absurd or nonsensical or causeless; and, similarly, the inferences of Griggs and Lowes from the remark that the poem was a work of "pure imagination" can be corrected by the restatement of Coleridge's concept of the imagination.

The Ancient Mariner, then, has a meaning; not a literal one, not an allegorical one, but a symbolic one. A symbol for Coleridge, says Mr. Warren, is "focal, massive, and not arbitrary"; that is, according to our critic, it combines idea and feeling, it implies a body of ideas and does not stand for a single idea, and "it is not a mere sign" but "contains within itself the appeal which makes it serviceable as a symbol." Read as a symbolic poem, *The Ancient Mariner* has two basic themes: the primary (not the more important but merely the more obvious) is that of the "One Life" or of "sacramental vision"; the secondary, the

theme of the imagination. Discussion of the first turns on the nature of the Mariner's act; literally, he killed a bird; symbolically, he commits murder. Why is the crime unmotivated? It "symbolizes the Fall"; we are here "confronting the mystery of the corruption of the will." But the sin of the will is the expression of the essence of the will; the crime is the crime of pride.

The secondary theme is the theme of the imagination; in it the Mariner appears as one who is driven from a "world of comfortable familiarity" by a storm, which is "the creative urge," to a land of ice, which is "both beautiful and terrible, as is proper for the spot where the acquaintance with the imagination is to be made." Like the storm, it "shakes man from his routine of life"; but out of this apparent indifference to man "comes the first response to man—the Albatross." Wind and bird, according to Mr. Warren, are associated with the moon or the half-light, which is the symbol of the imagination; the sun, on the other hand, symbolizes the "light of the 'understanding.'" These symbols, we are told, are ambivalent, i.e., now hostile, now beneficial, to man. The crime is a crime against the imagination; the imagination obtains its terrible redress but also "heals" the Mariner; the wandering is also a blessing and a curse, for the Mariner is the "poète maudit" as well as the "prophet of universal charity."

I trust this much of summary will be sufficient—not perhaps to Mr. Warren who, if he is like most authors, must feel that his best summary is his own work—but to most serious readers of his essay. On the supposition that it is sufficient, what can be said of Mr. Warren's interpretations?

We may begin by noting how Mr. Warren so easily subverts the positions of Griggs and Lowes. "Obviously, only the reader who cannot enjoy this journey into the realm of the supernatural finds it necessary to seek out a moral," said Griggs, and Mr. Warren remarks: "I take it that Griggs uses the word *moral* in a broad, general sense, equating it with theme understood as a comment on human conduct and values. . . . And if this . . . is what he means, he is saying that the poem

has no theme." Now, this "taking it" is precisely what Mr. Warren has no title to do, if, indeed, it be such sheer absurdity to assert that a poem has no theme,¹ especially since Griggs very obviously means something quite different, and something perfectly sensible. He means that the pleasure arising from the poem *as a poem* is so great that only one incapable of feeling that pleasure would ask for anything more. And this "equating" is a gratuity of Mr. Warren's, not of Griggs's; for, even granting that every poem must have a theme, it is by no means the case that every theme is a comment on human conduct and values; and even if that were the case, it would not follow that such comment would be *ethical* comment; and even if that, too, were granted, it would not follow that every ethical comment is a *moral*. The rout of Griggs, in short, is accomplished by incorrect interpretation followed by illicit inference. Even the passage of which Griggs has, according to Mr. Warren, "reversed the undebatable sense," suffers a similar fate; for, having just cited Coleridge's remark that the poem "ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights tale," and so forth, Mr. Warren calmly says: "Nor did he [Coleridge] say or even imply that the poem would be better if there were *no* moral."

The refutation of Lowes is similarly facile. Lowes remarked that repentance, although it lightened the soul, did not absolve; this Mr. Warren takes as the "theme" and is astounded

¹ We may indeed worry about whether, on the contrary, it is not an absurdity to conceive of a poem as *having* a theme or meaning. The words have a meaning; they mean the poem; but why should the poem itself have any further meaning? What sense is there in asking about the meaning of something which is itself a meaning? And if there is any point to this asking, shall we not have a further meaning still, and so on *ad infinitum*, so that interpretation becomes impossible, as being an infinite process? Moreover, these "meanings of poems" are at best something very trivial, prosaic, and obvious: *Edipus* means that man walks in darkness, *Hamlet* that man is utterly alone, *The Ancient Mariner* that life is one and that the imagination revenges itself, etc. Such interpretation springs from the use of a very arid grammatical apparatus and wholly blinks the question of how powerfully we are affected by the spectacle of human fortunes, as well as that of how the situation, character, passion, and thought of the poetic *personae* affect their speech.

when Lowes goes on to say that this "law of life" appears merely to render the poem a more credible illusion, the moral being untenable outside the poem, because of the disproportion of cause to effect and of crime to punishment. This means, says Mr. Warren, that the moral is not to be taken seriously and, indeed, that it could not be; and this is unthinkable for Mr. Warren, for it means that poems are "in themselves meaningless and nothing but refined and ingenious toys for an idle hour." How Mr. Warren arrives at this conclusion is obvious; in his simple world poems either have a moral or they are mere toys, and no Puritan was ever so flat and dogmatic about the matter. Deny Mr. Warren's contention of a moral, and a trap opens to drop you into the abyss of absurdity. But, I protest, Griggs and Lowes are "refuted," not because of any absurdity in their statements or fallacy in their inferences; they are so only through Mr. Warren's introduction of a wholly untenable exclusive disjunction and through his complete distortion of their utterances.

Even so, how deep is this abyss of absurdity? Is it, after all, so utterly contemptible to regard poems as affording pleasure rather than truth? If so, Mr. Warren must condemn Coleridge as well; for, merely to quote Coleridge's famous definition of a poem:

A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species—(having *this* object in common with it)—it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part* [*Biographia literaria*, chap. xiv].

In other words, the differentia of the class *poem* is pleasure and the kinds and sources of pleasure; and, as Coleridge says, "The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasureable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself." Nor is Mr. Warren's contention that imagination is cognitive pertinent here, for Coleridge sharply distinguished *poem* and *poetry*; it is to the latter that the imagination is relevant. The

passage is well worth considering; having just defined "poem" as above, he continues:

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato and Jeremy Taylor, and Burnett's *Theory of the Earth*, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah . . . is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert that pleasure, and not truth, was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word, Poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry. . . .

And he continues, "What is poetry? . . . is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet?—that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. . . . The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity. . . ." He unites and blends all the faculties "by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination."

We may now ask: Was the action of the poem intended, as Mr. Warren seems to suppose, to be "real"? If so, in what sense? And how, since undoubtedly poems effect pleasure and since *The Ancient Mariner* is undoubtedly a poem, did Coleridge propose to effect pleasure by it? But again Coleridge answers these questions for us:

In the one [series of poems], the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency.

These persons and characters, "supernatural or at least romantic," were to be so treated "as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to

procure for these shadows of the imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."

Seldom has a poet so clearly indicated his intentions and method, and the case is clear: Griggs and Lowes have followed Coleridge, and it is Mr. Warren who has misread, or read with insufficient care, "his text." They have held that, as a poem, *The Ancient Mariner* proposed as its end pleasure and not truth and that the "reality" of the poem is a *reality by supposition*—something which, though unreal, we may suppose to be real by a "willing suspension of disbelief." Nor are they incorrect in calling the poem "dreamlike"; Coleridge himself could use the expression in precisely the same sense:

You will take especial note of the marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the Faery Queene. It is in the domains neither of history nor of geography; it is ignorant of all artificial boundary, all material obstacles; it is truly in land of Faery, that is, of mental space. The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep, and you neither wish, nor have the power, to inquire where you are, or how you got there (*Coleridge's Miscellaneous criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor [Cambridge, 1936], p. 36; from *Literary remains*).

Ignoring these *loci classici* of Coleridgeans, Mr. Warren in effect supposes (1) that the poem does not have the effect which Coleridge says it was to have and (2) that it has some other end which Coleridge denies it to have; and on this latter supposition his whole chimerical interpretation is predicated.

In the first place, despite the argument that the poem is symbolic and not allegorical, Mr. Warren's interpretation clearly makes the poem what Coleridge calls allegory. The "true sense" of the word *allegory*, says Coleridge, "is this,—the employment of one set of agents and images to convey in disguise a moral meaning, with a likeness to the imagination, but with a difference to the understanding,—those agents and images being so combined as to form a homogeneous whole . . ."² But, secondly, is the

Mariner a "symbolic" poem? Here we must make a distinction. If by "symbolic" we refer to the imitative or participative relations of the One and the Many, familiar enough in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophers with whom Coleridge associated himself, doubtless the poem is symbolic. It is this, in a Coleridgean sense, because, in so far as it is also poetry, it reflects the particular activity of the imagination which produced that poetry; because that activity, in turn, images the imagination; and because the imagination, in turn, images the creative activity of God. Again, if by "symbolic" we mean merely the more particular as revealing the more universal, which is all that Coleridge seems to intend,³ we need not quarrel. But if by any interpretation of the term we commit ourselves, as does Mr. Warren, to an exegesis of how one thing in Coleridge must always mean something else, we are exceeding our evidence. Coleridge's discussion of the origin of the *Lyrical ballads*, already cited in part, offers no hint of symbolism in this sense. I can recall no use by Coleridge—certainly, no crucial use—of the term "symbol" as interpreted by Mr. Warren, even in such major critical flights as Coleridge's discussions of Wordsworth and of Shakespeare; nor, indeed, does the term "symbol" bear Mr. Warren's meaning even when it is central to the discussion, as in Coleridge's remarks on *Don Quixote*. Undoubtedly, Coleridge's conception of the imagination influenced his criticism and his creation; but it was a profoundly philosophical conception; and Mr. Warren's refusal to treat its profounder aspects is responsible, in part, for his interpretation of the term "symbol."

— Thirdly, supposing the poem were symbolic, as it clearly is not, on what basis does Mr. Warren determine the referents of the symbols? How is the moon, for instance—the key-

² "I adopt with full faith, the principle of Aristotle, that poetry, as poetry, is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident; that its apparent individualities of rank, character, or occupation must be representative of a class; and that the persons of poetry must be clothed with generic attributes, with the common attributes of the class: Not with such as one gifted individual might possibly possess, but such as from his situation it is most probable before-hand that he would possess" (*Biog. lit.*, chap. xvii).

³ Raysor, pp. 32-33, cf. pp. 28-32; also pp. 98-103, where Coleridge discusses symbol and allegory, and *Don Quixote* in terms of them.

symbol according to him—equated with the imagination? We are told that the moon, or if not the moon, some sort of half-light, frequently appears in Coleridge's work; that it is sometimes symbolic; that it and sunset and other accidents of light and shade diffuse a sudden novelty over the familiar, not unlike "the modifying colors of the imagination," according to Coleridge. That is sufficient to make the moon the symbol of the imagination for Mr. Warren. The crime now is "a crime against the imagination." In vain we ask why. Mr. Warren simply says: "Of course." One should rather have supposed that, if the crime is one against the imagination, the Polar Spirit would have represented the imagination, for certainly it is the Polar Spirit, and not the moon, who loves the bird, who is offended by its slaughter, and who exacts revenge. Why is the wind the symbol of the creative urge? Why, particularly, is it a symbol of the necessary kind, "rooted in our universal natural experience," as are all phallic symbols? Does that mean that the wind can never symbolize anything else? All that Mr. Warren says here amounts to this: the wind is inimical, and so is the creative urge, to complacent man. Why is the sun the light of natural prudence? Because, says Mr. Warren, "the sun is, symbolically speaking, the cause of their [the other mariners'] acceptance of the crime . . . they repudiate the luminous haze, the other light, and consider it an evil, though we know that the fog and mist are associated with the moon in the wind-bird-moon cluster." And in their fortunes—Mr. Warren suggests—we have perhaps some fable of the Enlightenment which terminated in the blood-bath of the French Revolution. So amid generous assumptions, undistributed middles, inconsistencies, misinterpretations, ignoratioes elenchi, post hoc ergo propter hoc's, etc., Mr. Warren makes his way by the light, or shall we say the half-light, of a vague supposition which he terms the "symbolic cluster"—a supposition that "symbols" simultaneously presented are henceforth linked (cf. p. 90). Here is an illustration of one of the crucial points in the interpretation:

The Albatross, the sacramental bird, is also, as it were, a moon-bird. For here, with the bird,

the moon first enters the poem, and the two are intimately associated. . . . The sun is kept entirely out of the matter. The lighting is always indirect, for even in the day we have only "mist or cloud,"—the luminous haze, the symbolic equivalent of moonlight. But not only is the moon associated with the bird, but the wind also. Upon the bird's advent a "good south wind sprung up behind." And so we have the creative wind, the friendly bird, the moonlight of imagination all together in one symbolic cluster [p. 91].

Since Mr. Warren has been at pains to show a symbol to be, for Coleridge, "focal, massive, and not arbitrary," one would imagine that his demonstration would follow these lines; that, for example, he would argue that the moon is the symbol of the imagination because it is the focal, massive, and nonarbitrary representative of the imagination; but he does not—and, in fact, it is not. All such interpretation is really uncontrolled analogy; the double themes, their fusions, and the multivalent symbols permit anyone to make of the poem whatever he may choose.

In short, we may say to Mr. Warren what Coleridge himself once quoted: We shall not descend the dark cave of Trophonius with you, there to rub our own eyes, in order to make the sparks and figured flashes, which we are required to see. And more pertinently, perhaps, we may say, again with Coleridge:

Apollo be praised! Not a thought like it would ever enter of its own accord into any mortal mind; and what is an additional good feature, when put there, it will not stay, having the very opposite quality that snakes have—they come out of their holes into open view at the sound of sweet music, while the allegoric meaning slinks off at the very first notes and lurks in murkiest oblivion—and utter invisibility.

ELDER OLSON

University of Chicago

West Virginia place names. By HAMILL KENNY. Piedmont, W. Va.: Place Name Press, 1945. Pp. xii+768.

The place-names of Dane County, Wisconsin. By FREDERIC G. CASSIDY. ("Publications of the American Dialect Society," No. 7.) Greensboro, N.C.: American Dialect Society, 1947. Pp. 251.

About seventy-five years ago Isaac Taylor pointed out that the study of American place-names is of value to the philologist because of the recency of American place-naming, just as recent geological changes are of interest to the historical geologist because of their re-enactment of ancient processes. Only in the past few years, however, have students of American English taken place-names seriously and worked out a methodology for their study. Cassidy's monograph is a model of this refined methodology; Kenny's book is a disappointment in both planning and execution.

Each of these writers establishes a corpus, that is, presents a dictionary of the place-names in his area, and each prefixes his dictionary with an introduction in which the names are classified, analyzed, and discussed.

Kenny does not define the limits of his West Virginia dictionary, and it is impossible to determine the criteria used for inclusion and exclusion of names. Some extinct names, such as Champwood, Durbannah, Jaggartown, and Ebenezer, are included, as are some names presumably extinct, such as Buckletown, Basnettville, and Damascus; but hundreds of obsolete West Virginia place-names are ignored. For example, *The century atlas* (1897) lists and maps twenty West Virginia names beginning with *A* which Kenny does not put in his dictionary (including Addison, a county seat); and the United States Post Office Department lists of post offices for 1877, 1887, and 1897 reveal forty-four omissions under *A* alone. Hundreds of extant names are mentioned incidentally but do not appear as headwords. The eclectic nature of the dictionary is indicated by the fact that a few county names, such as Wyoming, Pocahontas, and Monongalia have main entries, but most county names are treated briefly in the entry for Barbour County; a few district names (Collins Settlement, Cooper, Irish Corner) have main entries, but dozens do not; numerous names of springs are lumped under Berkeley Springs; and sometimes the reader is merely referred to Gannett's *Gazetteer of West Virginia* (1904) for whole groups of names, as those containing *Burnt*, s.v. "Burnt House"; *Laurel*, s.v. "Laurel Creek"; and *Meadow*, s.v. "Meador." Such

unmethodical and whimsical selection makes generalization about West Virginia names and naming impossible.

Important works, such as the Craigie-Hulbert *Dictionary of American English* and the United States Department of Agriculture county soil maps, were not consulted. Other important sources, such as the United States Geological Survey topographic sheets and the United States post office lists, were used only slightly. The following names, for example, which Kenny dates from 1904, can be dated earlier from post office lists: Henderson (1881), Grimm's Landing (1878), Lake (1884), and Manown (1899). Blaine is cited only for 1933; it was established as a post office in 1884. Consultation of the *Atlas to accompany the official records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865* would have corrected statements made about numerous names, for example, Vandalia, Fayetteville, Aurora, German Settlement, Hard Scrabble, Locust Lane, and Point Mountain, and would have added many names to the dictionary.

Several types of highly useful sources were ignored. Back files of local newspapers would have been valuable for their incidental mention (hence dating) of place-names. State and federal geological survey reports could frequently provide early dates and exact locations, particularly of natural features which are rarely mentioned elsewhere. Tax records and land surveys are important primary sources, particularly where surveyors' field notes are part of the records. Minutes of county governing bodies relating to road, bridge, and waterway matters preserve early references to "small names" which are hard to find in other records. The failure to use such records results in the citation of many names only in a 1933 atlas or other recent publication.

Kenny's dictionary commendably follows the method of historical dictionaries in listing under most names the definition (location), dated citations of occurrence, and an account of the origin and variant or earlier names; but the names are usually defined very generally, and some places are not located or are vaguely located, e.g., Anvil Rock, Camp Mistake,

Chidester. The excellent system of dated citations (in some respects better than Cassidy's) is marred by occasional omission of dates, as in the case of Captina, Logan, Pocotaligo, Potomac River, Tygart River, and Youghiogheny River; and by occasional citations out of chronological order, as in the case of Cacapon River, Kanawha River, New River, Old Fields, and Sideling Hill. Some main entries in the dictionary are out of alphabetical order, e.g., Bantz, Barbour, Buff Lick, Wanego, and Wappocomo.

Abbreviations of titles cited by Kenny are unstandardized and confusing. The "Table of abbreviations and short titles" on pages 67-68 omits some of the most frequent abbreviations and includes some rarely used. Many items in the "Bibliography" and "List of maps consulted" (pp. 699-728) are inexplicably assigned two, three, or even four different abbreviations. Often the abbreviation listed is not the one used. Under the name "Cacapon" occur twelve citations in abbreviated form; eleven of the abbreviations differ from the forms in the bibliography and map list. Under "Gauley River" occur seven citations, only three of which are abbreviations identifiable in the lists. Some are completely baffling, e.g., "USHyTDrEdBrksUnivG1821." A frequently used reference is *West Virginia historic and scenic highway markers*, abbreviated "WVaHSHM"; this book is cited in at least nine different forms.

The handling of phonetics in the West Virginia study cannot be commended. Instead of a simple list of the symbols used, we find (p. 69) the linotype phonetic symbol chart, which contains fifty symbols not used in the book, and which omits at least fifteen symbols that do occur. Pronunciations are not indicated for many names, e.g., Asbury, Cairo, Ceredo, Elana, McAlpin, Nugent, Okonoka, Onoto, Siota, and Vacluse. Particularly serious is this omission when the name presents an etymological problem; examples are Bolair, Booher, Cacapon, Duhring, Guyandot, Monongalia, Pinnickinnick, Pocasin, Weyanoke, and Kanawha (one of the very important West Virginia names). An unconventional use of symbols appears in the indication of syllabic consonants in

such forms as Copen, Cowen, Dyer, Maher, Maben, and Opequon, where [ŋ] and [ɾ] are generally considered unpronounceable. The well-known southern neutralization of [ɛ] and [ɪ] before nasals is mentioned (p. 48) as "a change from [ɛ] to [ɪ]," but such names as Central, Emmett, Engle, Ennis, and Kentuck are listed without transcription, and others, such as Ghent, Jayenne, and Renick are transcribed only with [ɛ].

Kenny includes an index, usually unnecessary in a book of this type, but needed here because possibly a thousand names are mentioned incidentally, without having headword entry. The index is inconsistent in entering names; page numbers are sometimes missing; important occurrences of names are sometimes not indexed; and unexplained symbols appear after some names.

Turning from the dictionary to the introduction of a place-name study, one expects to find the generalizations of linguistics and other apposite sciences applied to the names under examination and to find the data collected in the dictionary used to produce new generalizations. Kenny's introductory essay is superficial in two respects: (1) only the most obvious classifications and analyses are attempted, and these amateurishly; and (2) the names treated are very frequently not drawn from the annotated dictionary but are taken directly from original sources without listing or documentation. There is no analysis of historical trends, no account of name-composition or spreading or relationship to British or other American place-naming. The comments on orthography and phonology contribute nothing to language study and afford little help to the user of the dictionary.

Typographical errors, merely disfiguring in most books, are serious flaws in a language study. I note *namts* for *names* (p. 44); the phonetic symbol [k] for [k] (p. 46); accent omitted from transcription of *Berkeley* (p. 107); accent mark omitted from *Boyé* (p. 160); 1822 for 1882 *s.v.* "Keyser" (p. 349); list for lists (p. 358); symbol omitted from transcription of *Losie* (p. 386); Srabble for Scrabble (p. 560); 1682 for 1862 *s.v.* "Spenser" (p. 594); Mountains for Mountain (p. 744); Macarthur

for MacArthur (p. 751); and Kanawna for Kanawha (p. 737). "Devon" is transcribed in one way on page 207, in another on page 456; and some of the unconventional spellings and symbols in the index have the appearance of typographical errors.

In his *Place-Names of Dane County, Wisconsin*, Frederic Cassidy has sought to list "all the place-names that have or have had any sort of public status (however restricted) within Dane County" since the county was settled, and to annotate each name as a lexical entry, with the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a model. The resulting glossary of about sixteen hundred names includes spellings, pronunciation (when not obvious) in I.P.A. symbols, definition (location and type of feature), etymology or provenience, citation of sources of evidence, date-ranges, alternate names and changes in application of names, and usage—all presented clearly and concisely. Obsolete names are starred. Cassidy's list of names is properly a dictionary, not a gazetteer or cyclopedia; and his lexicography is based on firsthand investigation and written records. The citations are not so full as Kenny's, but Cassidy states explicitly (p. 13) his criteria for including and excluding citations. Some students of place-names may quarrel with his practice of entering every post office as an independent name (e.g., giving the capital of Wisconsin two headword entries: Madison and Madison P.O.) and with his narrow transcription of the pronunciation of a few foreign-language names (which does not show how the names occur in Wisconsin English phonology); but these are matters on which opinions may differ; they are not errors. Especially commendable is Cassidy's cautious, yet resourceful, handling of the origin of the names—the heart of a place-name study.

The introductory essay is a penetrating, enlightening, and informed description of methodology, the place-naming process as it has de-

veloped in Dane County, the composition and classes of names, and the linguistic and social aspects of the names recorded and annotated in the dictionary. Several charts present briefly and strikingly all the types of names applied to all the types of features, and the patterns of local spreading of names are displayed usefully. There are two matters which may deserve more extended treatment than Cassidy gives them: the use of the definite article in names and the nomenclature of roads. River and creek names are said (p. 15) to lose the generic element sometimes, compensating by prefixing *the*; The Catfish and The Sugar are cited as examples. In general American usage, *the* always precedes a river name when the generic is suppressed and usually when it is expressed; creek names, however, do not normally take the article. Since The Catfish and The Sugar have been called rivers as well as creeks, the article may not be anomalous. But this does not explain The Brewery Creek (p. 79), The Goose Pond (p. 119), The Horseshoe Bend (p. 131), and about two dozen other names in which *the* is unexpected. Since absence of the article is a formal characteristic of such names, these entries may be descriptive terms rather than genuine names.

The Dane County roads, with few exceptions, seem to be named for a town which the road connects with Madison, the principal city. Since written evidence, particularly official records, is likely to represent the usage of the political capital and hence obscure a complex feature of place-naming, it would be useful to know what the roads are called by people who live in the smaller places at a distance from Madison.

It is to be hoped that future American place-name study will be as competent as Cassidy's.

JAMES B. McMILLAN

University of Alabama

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CONTENTS FOR MAY 1948

No. 4

<i>Piers the Plowman</i> after Forty Years	J. R. Hubbert	215
Cleanness Brooks, or, The Bankruptcy of Critical Monism	R. S. Crane	226
Victorian Bibliography for 1947	Austin Wright	246
Discussion		
"A 'New' Reading of <i>Othello</i> ": a Reply to Mr. Stoll	Moody E. Prior	270
Book Reviews		273

ALLAN H. GILBERT: *On the composition of "Paradise lost"* (Ernest Siriuck).—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE: *The rime of the Ancient Mariner*. With an essay by ROBERT PIERRE WARREN (Elder Olson).—HAROLD KENNY: *West Virginia place names* (James B. McMillan).—FREDERICK G. CARLSON: *The place-names of Dane County, Wisconsin* (James B. McMillan).

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